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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the 12 issues of "Parent News" (an electronic Internet magazine for parents, prepared for the National Parent Information Network) published during 1997. Each monthly issue contains feature articles describing the activities of the National Parent Information Network, summarizing research useful to parents, announcing major events and conferences, and addressing issues of interest to parents. Topics of feature articles include healthy communities; television; children's health; discipline; grandparents as parents; grade repetition; reading to infants and children; partnerships for student success; services for teen parents; child care; fathering; family and community traditions; eating habits; children with special needs; brain development in young children; preventing substance abuse; displaced children; language acquisition; latchkey children; motor skill and cognitive skill development; partnerships between parents and physicians; the Internet and families; teen drivers; foster parenting; parent information centers; and adoption. Some articles are reprinted with permission from other sources. Also included in each issue are sections that provide information geared to the interests of parents, including: (1) book reviews; (2) World Wide Web and gopher sites; (3) organizations; (4) national organization phone numbers; (5) a calendar of events; (6) newsletters; and (7) guides, brochures, and fact sheets for parents. (DR)

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PARENT NEWS

A Compilation of 1997 Issues

Volume 3, nos. 1-12*

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Parent News is the monthly news magazine of the National Parent Information Network (NPIN), a special project of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Written for parents, this online magazine addresses frequently asked questions from parents and those who work with them.

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NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for January 1997

- What's New on NPIN
- January's Feature:
  A New Year, A New Outlook
- Community Spotlight:
  Building a Healthy Community by Anne S. Robertson
- Of Interest
  - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
  - *Factors Related to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome*
  - *The Debate Over Spanking* by Dawn Ramsburg
  - *Researchers Seeking Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*
  - *When Teachers Recommend Retention, What Should Parents Do?* by Anne S. Robertson
  - *Careful Planning for Successful Birthday Parties* by Debbie Reese
  - *Fathers! Grandparents! Signficant Males! Read to Children*
  - *Student Scholarships and Awards*
  - *Important Theme Weeks This Winter on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
- The Parenting Calendar

Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

PS 027210

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Parent News for January 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during December 1996

Several new items have been added to three of the topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the topical area, Parents and Schools as Partners, the following six items are new:

- Class-Size Effects in the Primary Grades: Research in Tennessee
  Describes the results of a study of pupil-teacher ratios in grades 1 through 3, a study of class size in grades K-3 in schools participating in the STAR Project, and a lasting benefits study that served as a follow-up to the STAR study.
- Chapter 3, "Two-Way Communication between Home and School" in *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities.*
  Outlines the differences between two-way and one-way communication and offers suggestions for two-way communication and for active listening; also discusses positive phone calls, telephone answering machines, and home visits.
- Chapter 4, "Involving Parents in the Life of the School" in *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities.*
  Discusses how to motivate parents to participate in schools, the culture of schools, parents as classroom visitors, how schools can welcome parents, social events that can bring parents together, parents as volunteers, and the school as a resource center.
- Preventing and Resolving Parent-Teacher Differences. ERIC Digest.
  Examines the context of parent-teacher relationships; suggests ways for parents and teachers to avoid conflicts and strategies to use when they do experience conflicts.
- Should My Child Repeat a Grade?
  Explains why children are held back, and presents some facts about retention and suggestions for parents to help their children overcome academic or behavior problems.
- Student Grade Retention. Position Statement.
  Outlines situations in which retention has not been successful and situations in which it is least likely to be harmful to students.

In the topical area, Children's Health and Nutrition, the following two items are new:

- La lactancia es buena para el bebé--y también para usted.
- Men Have Babies Too.
  Describes how a father's diet, habits, lifestyle, and attitude play a part in the health of his baby; answers some questions expectant fathers may ask about the relationship of their lifestyle to their child's health.

In the topical area, Children and the Media, there is one new item:

- Television Violence: What the Research Says about Its Effect on Young Children.
  Presents some statistics related to and offers some thoughts on children and television violence.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources:

Books section of NPIN:

- *Practical Guide to Discipline and Behavior Management for Teachers and Parents,* by Peter A. Ross.
- *Kindergarten: Ready or Not? A Parent's Guide,* by Sean A. Walmsley.
- *Save Our Schools: 66 Things You Can Do to Improve Your School Without Spending an Extra Penny,* by Mary Susan Miller.
- *Barriers to Parent Involvement in Head Start Programs,* by Nicole M. Driebe and Others.
- *Involving All Families: An Annotated Bibliography of Materials for Families,* by Diane Talley Davis, Compiler, and Others.
- *Manual for the Identification and Abatement of Environmental Lead Hazards,* by Lawrence Chadzynski.
- *Grandloving: Making Memories with Your Grandchildren,* by Sue Johnson and Julie Carlson.

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Today's Father*
- *Statewide News: from Parents Anonymous*
- *Bernard van Leer Foundation Newsletter*

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- New Parents Network
- National Youth Sports Safety Foundation
- Attention Deficit Disorders Association--Southern Region

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Special Feature

A New Year, A New Outlook

Greetings from the National Parent Information Network and the ERIC/EECE Clearinghouse. Our very best wishes for the New Year!

We have exciting news for our new year. After 27 years, we are leaving our large, stone house at 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue in Urbana to head for the Children's Research Center in Champaign. There are a number of child- and family-related programs located at the center, including the University Primary School. As with any move, it will be difficult to leave our home, but we are looking forward to being in a location with so many other child- and family-related professionals. Our new address is:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469

This move, along with the beginning of the new year, gives us the opportunity to sweep the cobwebs out and plan for the future. Through the work of a dedicated staff, using a team approach, the National Parent Information Network provides the following services:

- *Parent News*--a valuable Internet resource, updated monthly, with such items as current articles, books, organizations, community programming ideas, and interesting Web sites.
- *PARENTS AskERIC*--a question-and-answer service for parents, teachers, administrators, and parent education specialists.
- *PARENTING-L Discussion List*--an informal online list of parents, and professionals who work with parents, discussing current parenting issues.
- *Resources for Parents, and for Those Who Work with Parents*-- building a variety and perhaps the largest collection of current journals, articles, and books on family life, child development, and parenting from birth through early adolescence.

For 1997, we hope to expand these services as well as look at some new projects such as the Families, Technology, and Education Conference sponsored by the ERIC Clearinghouse and the National Parent Information Network. Planned for the fall of 1997, this conference will look at the role of technology in linking schools and families; the effects of media on children, their activities, and family life; technology and children's disabilities; as well as equity issues in family access to computers.

We also hope to develop other projects in response to some of the concerns from parents and professionals who work with parents. We respond, weekly, to as many as 30 parenting or parenting-related questions, and we have received several requests for our most frequently asked parenting questions and our responses. While we would never release an individual's question for confidentiality reasons, it would be interesting and helpful to parent educators and parents alike to provide an overview of typical questions and solutions.

Other services we hope to expand include:

- Developing National Parent Information Network research sites--perhaps located in family centers, preschools, and child care or school locations.
- Increasing the number of technology and family-school involvement presentations for professionals.
- Expanding the resources that will facilitate the implementation of successful community programs designed to improve the environment for children and families.

We would also like to introduce our NPIN team. We are fortunate to have people with a variety of experiences and educational backgrounds in this committed group, starting with our director Dr. Lilian Katz:

Dr. Lilian Katz

"I became interested in the field of early childhood education during the five years I participated as a cooperating mother in parent cooperative nursery schools with my three children in northern California.

Soon after my youngest child began kindergarten, I took a position as a cooperative nursery school teacher myself and soon realized the need for more training and education. Within a few years thereafter, I completed a B.A. and Ph.D. in child development at Stanford University, and I accepted the position in the Early Childhood Education Department of the University of Illinois where I have served now for 28 years.

During the last 26 years, I have also served as director of the Clearinghouse--years of dynamic growth and development. Involvement in this field has given me the opportunity to work with colleagues all over the country and many other countries as well. In between, I take as many opportunities as I can to enjoy three wonderful children and five superb grandchildren!"

Dianne Rothenberg

"As a mother of two and a grandmother of two, I know firsthand the joys and difficulties of single parenting and being a working parent. I am constantly reminded that the ultimate joy of being a parent is watching your own children become caring, thoughtful parents themselves. I consider myself very lucky to be involved in work that helps all parents find their way through the maze of information available to them as they raise their children.

The National Parent Information Network has been a focus of our activity here at ERIC/EECE since late 1993. PARENTS AskERIC, our Internet-based question-answering service for parents, also started during that year.

We continue to work toward finding ways of getting high-quality parenting information to parents who need it and to help underserved parents gain access to the Internet."

Bernard Cesarone

"I am the webmaster for the National Parent Information Network Web site and also for ERIC/EECE's main Web site and the several other Web sites sponsored or maintained by ERIC/EECE. This job involves overseeing the general design and content of the Web sites, supervising the students who prepare the HTML pages for the Web sites, and working with other ERIC/EECE staff members and representatives from other organizations on the site development of ERIC/EECE's and other organizations' Web sites.

I joined the staff at ERIC/EECE about five years ago in the publications department. Though my position evolved from publications into Internet-related activities, I still assist the publications editor in preparing print publications. I work closely with the publications editor to provide good access to our publications on our Web sites. I also work with our information services department to assure that our Internet resources are well integrated with our user services efforts.

I have a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in library and information science, both from the University of Illinois. My work experience prior to joining the ERIC/EECE staff was as a consultant in the computer-aided graphic design of electronic components and in editing. I also spent time running an art gallery. Art remains a strong outside interest, including studying, collecting, and producing (at an amateur level!). Other interests include writing, studying the music of India, hiking, and traveling."

Anne S. Robertson

"My work as the Research Associate for the National Parent Information Network (NPIN), is perhaps just a step below parenting heaven. In this role, I coordinate development of the multiple services that are offered through NPIN. That includes reviewing current literature and research on parenting and family life for possible inclusion in the ERIC database or NPIN resources, developing our monthly Internet-based Parent News, responding to parenting questions through our PARENTS AskERIC service, and working with our PARENTING-L listserv. It is exciting to be a part of this effective team as we seek to expand support for parents, family life, and communities.

Although I am a native of the Midwest, my family (husband, four children, and various pets), have spent the last 18 years living in different parts of the United States and gallivanting in several different countries. As a family, we enjoy most sports, traveling, and music. I received my B.S. in psychology from the University of Illinois and then returned to school with my children. Along with other part-time and volunteer work, I have been a parent volunteer, parent educator, substitute teacher, and teacher. When we lived on the East Coast, I completed my master's degree in international educational development at Boston University. I have had the opportunity to look at family and community development at the international level in both rural and urban cultures. I am deeply committed to the development of infrastructures that will support children, families, and communities."

Dawn Ramsburg

"Hello! I am one of the graduate assistants at NPIN. I started working with ERIC/NPIN in July of 1996. Since starting, I have worked on Parent News and on updating our Web links along with writing short articles as resources for parents. I am a native of Champaign, Illinois, and I am currently working on my Ph.D. in human and community development at the University of Illinois.

I have been working in the early childhood and child care areas for many years. Over 16 years ago, I began baby-sitting in my neighborhood and have since worked as a child care teacher for toddlers for about two years. More recently, I have worked as an administrative assistant at a local subsidized child care center, where I was involved in starting monthly parent meetings and coordinating other activities to increase parent involvement.

In addition to working at NPIN, I am presently a graduate assistant at our local child care resource and referral agency, where I am in charge of our database for six counties and where I am responsible for submitting reports to the state data coordinator. I also provide child care data on the six counties to various local agencies, such as The United Way and our Regional Planning Commission.

All of these experiences have led to my research interests in child care issues. More broadly, I am interested in work and family issues such as how parents meet the needs of their families as well as their jobs. I have a strong interest in public policy and advocacy regarding all of these issues. I hope to merge my interests after I finish my Ph.D. by working to develop family policy that keeps the needs of parents and children in the forefront, without compromising their quality of life or their options."

Debbie Reese

"I am a doctoral student in early childhood with special interests in multicultural education and family involvement in school. I am Pueblo Indian and grew up on a reservation in northern New Mexico, steeped in our cultural traditions. I am married and have a child in kindergarten. We return to the Pueblo frequently to maintain our ties and to participate in traditional ceremonies.

I taught elementary school for eight years in public and private schools, teaching primarily Native American or Latino(a) children. I currently teach undergraduate students in early childhood courses and conduct workshops on multicultural literature.

My strong sense of family and community and their significance in a child's life supports my work for NPIN. As part of the NPIN team for nearly two years, I write for Parent News and seek out organizations that support parents.

My experiences as a parent influence the articles I choose to write for Parent News. Early this fall, my mind was on packing lunches for my daughter, and so the article about juice appeared. Later, when Elizabeth's class adopted a pet snake, the article about the hazards of exotic pets appeared. Clearly, I am a concerned parent, writing for parents who are concerned about their children! I hope information I pass on is useful to NPIN readers."

Ron Banks

"My name is Ron Banks, and I am the User Services Coordinator at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. User Services staff participate in the NPIN effort by filling orders for ERIC Digests and other publications that parents find useful and by responding to parenting questions that require searches of ERIC and related databases, the Internet, and/or parenting and other reference book resources available at our Clearinghouse. We typically try to respond to parents within a couple days for AskERIC questions that can be answered using e-mail, or within a couple of weeks if we have to print out and surface mail the search results. We also provide support to other NPIN staff by searching for information in specialized databases such as MEDLINE when necessary.

I have master's degrees in special education and library and information science. I worked for about 15 years with children and adults with moderate to severe disabilities in a variety of settings, and then spent three years in a medical library setting before coming to ERIC. I enjoy tennis, outdoor activities, playing piano, reading, and activities with my family."

Timekia Faulkner

"Hello, my name is Timekia Faulkner. I have been working for ERIC for just over a year now, maintaining the gopher and World Wide Web sites. This is my fourth year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences studying English and mathematics. In the future, I would like to work in a middle school (preferably in Peoria, my hometown). I have had various experiences working with kids as a baby-sitter, tutor, and summer camp counselor. Currently, I teach toddlers and kindergartners at the church I attend.

As I stated above, I am from Peoria, Illinois. I have two brothers and one sister (Branden, Breion, and Briena) who are 14, 12, and 12 years old, respectively. My hobbies are reading and watching television. On campus, I am actively involved with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and am the prayer coordinator for the Urbana-South Chapter."

Tim McKnight

"I am a senior at the University of Illinois majoring in instrumental music education. At ERIC, I transfer print publications to the World Wide Web, and I also help design and maintain the various Web sites for which we are responsible. I have been at ERIC for six months, and I thoroughly enjoy working in the area of elementary and early childhood education. Next fall, I will be completing my student teaching near Chicago and will graduate in January 1998. When I enter the teaching profession shortly afterward, I will be certified to teach K-12 instrumental, choral, and general music.

I have always been involved with young children in many ways. I have taught Sunday School and Bible School for many years in my church, and I began teaching piano lessons in my community when I was 15 years old. Most importantly, I have eight wonderful nieces and nephews (soon to be nine) who have brought much joy into my life. Besides being involved in education in whatever way possible, I enjoy playing the piano and organ, working on computers, playing racquetball, and reading."

The staff of the National Parent Information Network knows that every family needs support in the challenging yet rewarding work of parenting and family life. We hope you will find our services useful during 1997, and please let us know your thoughts about ways we could expand our services to meet the needs of your community.

Prepared for Parent News by Anne S. Robertson

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Community Spotlight

Building a Healthy Community

by Anne S. Robertson

"What makes a healthy community for children and adolescents?" is a question that Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., examines daily in his work at the Search Institute in Minneapolis. In his recent article "Beyond the Village Rhetoric," he examines the implications of the popular "whole village" campaign. At one extreme, the public sector is viewed as responsible for the community's youth; at the other extreme, the family is viewed as solely responsible for raising its children (Benson, 1996).

Both families and communities, along with the local, state, and federal government, are important for building an infrastructure that supports the healthy development of children. But in Dr. Benson's opinion, what has been missed in the whole village discussion is a commitment to building the "developmental and relational foundation" that will assist with the development of adolescents (p. 3). He believes that this foundation calls for a new type of community investment and for new community programs.

To assist in developing a framework for healthy communities and programs, the Search Institute has been looking at community characteristics and their relationship to the development of the community's young people. In 1990, the institute created a framework of "30 Developmental Assets," both internal and external, which all youth need to grow into caring, competent adults. Recently, Search added 10 additional assets. Search has found that by increasing the number of positive attributes of a community, the lives of all those residing in the area will improve. Some of these attributes include (40 Developmental Assets, 1996, p. 11):

- External Assets
    - Family support
    - Caring school climate
    - Community values youth
    - Neighborhood boundaries
    - Positive peer influence
    - Creative activities
- Internal Assets
    - Achievement motivation
    - Bonding to school
    - Reading for pleasure
    - Honesty
    - Responsibility
    - Sense of purpose

Other professionals in the human services profession are also working to develop successful programs within communities to serve the needs of families and youth. Lisbeth B. Schorr has looked at a broad spectrum of model programs in health, education, and welfare. In her book *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, Ms. Schorr assesses some common elements that seem to be fundamental to successful community programs (Schorr, 1989, pp. 256-259). These programs:

- *Offer a broad spectrum of services.* They are able to link emotional and social support for families with food, housing, or employment assistance, or with something else that the family may need, such as antibiotics.

- *Cross traditional boundaries.* Successful programs regularly reach across professional or bureaucratic boundaries to meet human needs.
- *Allow for flexible program structures.* Staff members have more freedom to exercise their own judgment to meet the individual needs of families.
- *See the child in relation to the family and the family in relation to the community.* Parents and professionals are mobilized to work together and make use of the services available.
- *Respect the client.* The staff at the program are able to establish trust and solid personal relationships with the clients.
- *Provide easy-to-use, coherent services.* A small, committed team frequently provides long-term follow-through for individual needs.
- *Adapt or circumvent traditional boundaries.* At least one staff member takes responsibility for seeing that the child and family needs are met. No one says "this is not my job."
- *Demonstrate the ability to redefine their role to respond to the needs of the client.* Staff members shape their role and delivery of services around the community and clients they are serving.

By using benchmarks such as the 40 developmental assets, a community can begin to expand the foundation that supports its youth. Those assets might then be combined with the characteristics of effective programs to encourage specific development in needy areas.

One example of an initiative that is working to build its resources for children is Children First, located in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. Using the 40 developmental assets, a 30-member vision team guided the initiative, which included residents, schools, families, congregations, and other community organizations. Every effort was made to develop the capacity of existing professionals and programs towards shared responsibility. Some of the actions include having (Creating Healthy Communities, 1996):

- the high school girls basketball team read books to children at the public library on Saturday morning,
- the adults wait with the children for school buses, insuring their safety and building relationships,
- the school volunteers coordinate training in assets information for all volunteers.

When the whole community increases its awareness and links it with positive action, then communities such as St. Louis Park find that the support for all its children increases.

For more information about program development:

Search Institute: http://www.search-institute.org
Telephone: 1-800-888-7828
E-mail: assets@search-institute.org
(Contact the institute for a free copy of *Assets: The Magazine of Ideas for Healthy Youth.*)

The 40 Developmental Assets: http://www.search-institute.org/assets/index.htm

CHILDREN FIRST
St. Louis Park, Minnesota
Karen Atkinson

Telephone: 612-928-6075
Web site: http://www.stlpark.K12.mn.us/comm/childfirst/c-1st.html

Sources:

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in **Chapter Six: TV Magic--Effects and Special Effects** (see previous issues for chapters 1-5).

Many different effects and special effects are used to make television programs more interesting and exciting. While these techniques can help children understand a plot, they can also be distracting and confusing to younger children who have trouble distinguishing between reality and fantasy.

The purpose of this chapter is to help children learn more about the effects and special effects used on television, including: camera shots, slow motion, sound effects, different kinds of props, and editing. If children can understand how and why these techniques are used, they can learn more from the programs they watch.

What You Need to Know

All television programs use effects and special effects. With regard to special effects, advertisers have learned that children will keep their eyes on commercials that use exciting special effects and quickly change from one camera shot to another. As a result, many educational programs such as "Sesame Street" have imitated the fast pace of commercials to keep young children watching the set.

Keep in mind that these techniques are not always useful in helping children understand what they are watching and that they have an impact on children's imagination and creativity. For example, when a child reads a fairy tale, he or she must imagine the scene and think about what is happening. But when a child watches the same fairy tale on TV, all of the fantasy and creativity is in the hands of the people who create the television show. The child is passively watching the program without thinking about the story. On the other hand, if your child understands how special effects and effects are used, any program can become a puzzle to think about and solve.

Television Effects

Camera effect. A camera effect changes reality through the use of a camera. One of the most common techniques is called *panning*, which is moving the camera from side to side.

Adjusting the height of the camera. Placing the camera down low can make an actor look bigger, while placing the camera up high can make an actor look smaller.

Zooming in and out. Many television cameras have a zoom lens that allows for close-ups as well as long shots.

Editing. Unwanted parts of a video recording are electronically cut out and the desired pieces are saved. The result looks like a single continuous program.

Slow-motion. The normal speed of the camera is slowed down, making the action look slower than it is.

Discussion Ideas

Go over some of the effects described above with your child. Find some programs that use these effects. Ask your child to name them as you watch the program together. Keep a list of the effects you find. See how many you can discover in one evening.

Activities

1. Which programs use slow motion? Why do they use slow motion? What would the scene look like without slow motion?
2. Write a story about a superhero. At the end of the story, list the kinds of special effects you might use if you made a TV program about your story.
3. Which TV program show people disappearing? Make a list.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Factors Related to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

In the United States, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) remains the leading cause of death of infants between the ages of one month and one year. SIDS is defined as the:

> "sudden death of an infant under one year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history." (Willinger et al., 1991)

The diagnosis of SIDS is not easy. Essentially, SIDS is diagnosed as the cause of death only after all other possibilities have been excluded. Most deaths occur by the end of the sixth month of age with the highest risk between two and four months of age. A death from SIDS occurs quickly and silently with no apparent signs of suffering from the infant; however, the effect on the family that is left with wondering what they could have done to prevent this tragedy may be devastating. In addition, the legal system, which is involved with the investigation of the baby's death, accentuates the stress and guilt felt by the baby's family or caregivers.

Recently, several procedures have been shown to be helpful in reducing the risk of SIDS:

- *Place your baby on his or her back to sleep.* The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that healthy infants sleep on their backs or sides. They should not sleep on their stomach, but they may be placed on their stomach during waking hours while they are being watched.
- *Place your baby on a firm mattress.* Pillows, waterbeds, sheepskins, and other soft items may trap the air while the baby is sleeping, or the baby may get his or her nose or mouth buried in soft bedding. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued advisories against placing infants on beanbag cushions, sheepskins, foam pads, foam sofa cushions, adult pillows, and comforters.
- *Do not smoke around the baby or while you are pregnant.* Smoking during pregnancy has long been associated with other birth defects such as low birth rate, but smoking during and after a pregnancy may triple the baby's risk of SIDS. Exposure to smoke after birth may double the baby's risk of SIDS.
- *Help your baby regulate his or her temperature.* Overheating in the baby, which may be associated with too much clothing, an overheated room, or heavy bedding, may increase the risk of SIDS. Signs of overheating include damp hair, sweating, heat rash, rapid breathing, restlessness, or even fever. In order to help your baby regulate his or her temperature, try to maintain a consistent indoor climate of between 68 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Try not to overdress your baby; dress the baby in the same number of layers as you would wear in the same temperature.
- *Try to breast-feed your baby.* Breast-feeding may reduce the likelihood of SIDS as well as other infections or respiratory illnesses.

Other factors that may be related to SIDS are the colder winter months, a lower maternal age, and the sex of the baby (boys are at a greater risk). There appears to be a higher incidence of SIDS in low birth weight and premature babies.

It is important for families to understand that reducing the risk factors for SIDS will probably decrease the chances of their baby being affected, but it will not eliminate the possibility. A parent or caregiver may be doing everything right and still be affected by this tragedy. For more information and family support, including current research, questions and answers, and a SIDS "Chat with Others," we include the following organizations and Web sites.

The Family Village
Waisman Center
University of Wisconsin--Madison
1500 Highland Ave.
Madison, WI 53705-2280
Web site: http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/lib_sids.htm#Articles

National SIDS Resource Center
2070 Chain Bridge Rd., Suite 450
Vienna, VA 22182
Telephone: 703-821-8955
Web site: http://www.ichp.ufl.edu/MCH-NeLink/SIDS/SIDSFACT.HTM

The Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths
586 Eglingon Ave. E., Suite 308
Toronto, ON, Canada M4P1P2
Telephone:
416-488-3260
800-END-SIDS

Prepared for Parent News by Anne S. Robertson

Sources:

Reducing the risks of SIDS: Some steps parents can take. (1996, November 29). Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Network. [On-line]. Available Internet: http://sids-network.org/risk.htm

Schaaf, Rachelle V. (1996, November). Soft bedding is linked to SIDS. *PARENTS*, p. 47.

Willinger, M., James, L.S., & Catz, C. (1991, November). Defining the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): Deliberations of an expert panel convened by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. *Pediatric Pathology*, pp. 677-684.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

The Debate over Spanking

by Dawn Ramsburg

Spanking is one of the most controversial discipline methods. On one side of the debate are the parents who believe that it is all right to spank their children. At the other end are those who think that children should never be spanked. Somewhere in the middle are parents who believe that spanking should be used only in particular instances (e.g., when the child runs out into the street). Part of the reason for the debate is that parents and experts often define spanking differently. To some, spanking means "slapping a child on the buttocks" (Straus, 1995), while others consider spanking a generic term for slapping or hitting any part of the child. Spanking may also be referred to as beating, whipping, swatting, or corporal punishment.

Reasons for Spanking

While many adults would argue that hitting people is wrong, spanking children continues to be used as an acceptable form of discipline among many parents in the United States. They think spanking will teach children not to do things that are forbidden, stop them quickly when they are being irritating, and encourage them to do what they should (Leach, 1996). In addition, some parents believe that the nonphysical forms of discipline, like time-out, do not work (Samalin & Whitney, 1995). Spanking is also a practice more firmly rooted in some areas of the country than others (it is more common in the southern United States) and in some cultures more than others (Flynn, 1996; Scarr, 1995).

Effectiveness of Spanking

While spanking may relieve a parent's frustration and briefly stop misbehavior, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (1995), researchers suggest that spanking may be the least effective discipline method. To test this hypothesis, researchers surveyed parents with the assumption that if spanking worked, children who were spanked would learn to behave better over time so that they needed punishing less frequently (Leach, 1996). However, the results showed that families who start spanking before their children are a year old are just as likely to spank their four-year-old children as often as families who do not start spanking until later. Thus, children appear not to be learning the lessons parents are trying to teach by spanking.

Poor results may result because spanking by itself does not teach an alternative behavior (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1995). In fact, children usually feel resentful, humiliated, and helpless after being spanked (Samalin & Whitney, 1995). The primary lesson they learn appears to be that they should try harder not to get caught.

Spanking also sends the wrong message to children (Samalin & Whitney, 1995). Spanking communicates that hitting is an acceptable way to solve problems, and that it is all right for a big person to strike a smaller one. In addition, when children are spanked, they may know that they have done something wrong, but in many cases, they are too young to understand the lesson. It is a very difficult message for any adult or child to understand: "I hurt you because I don't want you hurt."

Finally, spanking may have some potentially harmful long-term effects such as increasing the chances of misbehavior, aggression, violent or criminal behavior, impaired learning, depression, and suicide

(Straus, 1995).

Alternatives to Spanking

One reason why parents spank is that they are not aware of other effective strategies for changing children's undesirable behavior. To be effective, discipline that is appropriate for the child's age should be used. Ineffective methods are often based on unrealistic expectations about what children are capable of learning.

Suggestions for Infants

1. When there is danger, grasp an infant's hand instead of slapping (Leach, 1996).
2. When the infant is holding something that you do not want him to have, trade a toy instead of forcing the item from him (Leach, 1996). He will only hold on tighter if you try to take something away.
3. Baby-proof your living space so that there is nothing dangerous or breakable in reach (Ruben, 1996; Samalin & Whitney, 1995).
4. Leave the room if you feel your temper flaring, making sure that the baby is in a safe place like a playpen (Leach, 1996).

Infants respond impulsively to many situations without a real understanding of their surroundings and abilities. Spanking will only cause fear and anxiety in children who do not yet understand such concepts as consequences and danger.

Suggestions for Toddlers

1. Make sure the environment is safe by removing any harmful or dangerous objects (Samalin & Whitney, 1995). It is natural for toddlers to want to explore their environment. Always supervise toddlers; it is unrealistic to expect a toddler to play safely without adult supervision for more than a few minutes (Leach, 1996).
2. Avoid direct clashes with toddlers, which will only make both of you angry and frustrated. Instead, try a diversion or distraction (Leach, 1996). Many problem situations can be eased with something funny or unexpected, such as tickling a mildly upset child (Ruben, 1996).
3. Use your size and strength to eliminate situations (Leach, 1996). Simply lift an uncooperative child out of the bath or carry a child who refuses to walk.
4. If you start to deliver a slap, divert it to your knee or a table (Leach, 1996). This sound will interrupt the behavior without hitting the child.

Disciplining toddlers requires a tremendous investment of time, energy, and patience, so it is important to find effective and appropriate techniques (Ruben, 1996). For example, it will not be effective to tell toddlers not to play with items that are dangerous to them such as the stove, because they do not understand the consequences (Samalin & Whitney, 1995). Spanking, however, will not clarify the consequences, either. Instead, children will more likely learn from spanking that "I'm a bad person," rather than "I did a bad thing." Finally, you must use discipline methods consistently, or your child will learn that you are not serious.

Suggestions for Older Children

1. When you start to feel angry with your children, clap your hands loudly (Leach, 1996). The sound will interrupt their behavior.

2. If your child refuses to listen to you, crouch down to his level, grasp his arms firmly so he cannot avoid looking at you, and then talk calmly (Leach, 1996).
3. Since spanking does not occur in calm, rational moments (Samalin & Whitney, 1995), it is especially important to control your anger to prevent "losing it." You can walk away, hit a pillow, call a friend, or write a note. Once you have cooled down, you will probably feel less inclined to spank.
4. If you feel you must punish your children, make sure it directly follows the incident so that they can learn the lesson you want to teach (Leach, 1996). For example, if your child rides her bike onto a road that is forbidden, take the bike away for the afternoon. This teaches her that roads can be dangerous, that you are concerned for her safety, and that you will enforce safety rules as long as they are needed. Taking away TV, dessert, or spanking will not teach anything related to bicycle safety.
5. Introduce the appropriate use of time-out (Ruben, 1996). Time-out used as a punishment is controversial. When used to allow a few minutes for a school-age child to regain control of his emotions, it can be effective in stopping a cycle of inappropriate behavior.

Suggestions for All Ages

1. Reward good behavior. Hugs and praise will go a long way (Ruben, 1996).
2. Try an ounce of prevention (Ruben, 1996). Effective discipline means announcing clear, simple family rules (the fewer, the better) at a time when children are calm and listening.
3. Try to understand the feelings behind your child's actions (Ruben, 1996). Ask older children why they are angry. For an infant, ask yourself when she cries: Does she want to be held? Is her diaper wet? Is she hungry?
4. Share your change of heart (Ruben, 1996). If you have spanked your children in the past, but have decided that you will stop, talk to your children about it. This can be a valuable lesson for your whole family if you say, "I was wrong to spank you, and I don't want to do it anymore."

Conclusion

The question of whether or not parents should spank their children is not easy to answer. However, spanking is only one of the factors which needs to be considered in the overall discipline process. In deciding how to discipline their children parents should first ask, "what do I want to accomplish?" If the answer is "to teach my children how to make good choices on their own," spanking may not even be an issue.

Sources:

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Straus, Murray. (1995). *Beating the devil out of them: Corporal punishment in American families*. New York: Lexington Books.

Related Source of Information:

The NoSpan King Page: http://cei.net/~rcox/nospan.html

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Researchers Seeking Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Attention grandparents! Researchers at the Center on Aging at Bradley University are looking for grandparents who are age 50 or older, living with at least one grandchild younger than 18, and the primary caregivers for a grandchild. The study is being funded by a three-year research grant from the National Institute on Aging.

The goals of the study are to identify the stresses that grandparents face when raising their grandchildren. After grandparents are recruited for the study, they are interviewed either in person (if they are within one hour of Peoria, Illinois) or by telephone, for approximately two hours. The interviews will cover such topics as the grandparents' responsibilities, their relationship with the grandchildren and other members of the family, and their resources, including their social networks.

If you would like more information on participating in this study, please call Erin Driscoll, the project manager of the Grandparent Study, at 1-800-695-5927.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

When Teachers Recommend Retention, What Should Parents Do?

by Anne S. Robertson

"Jason is one of the youngest children in the class, and I am concerned that he will not be able to keep up in first grade," said Jason's teacher who was meeting with his mother at a parent-teacher conference. Jason's mother felt a lump in her throat. "What did the teacher mean?" she wondered. Jason walked early, talked early, and liked kindergarten most of the time. The teacher, sensing her apprehension, reassured the mother. "Jason is a bright child, he may just need a little more time to grow." Jason's mother didn't understand.

Each year, many teachers must face the difficult problem of where and how to place children who do not seem to fit into the rest of the class. In many school districts, retention, or having the child repeat a grade, is an option that is frequently considered for children who appear to lag behind. Some variations of retention include:

- Transitional classrooms, a step between kindergarten and first grade, offering the child another year of growth and a different learning experience.
- "Red-Shirting," delaying a child's entrance to kindergarten, sometimes based on the results of a readiness test.

A child may be considered for retention if he or she has poor academic skills, is small in stature or the youngest in the grade, has moved or been absent frequently, does poorly on a prescreening assessment, or has limited English-language skills. In a few cases, the teacher may feel that the child is capable of moving forward, but the parent may feel that the child should be retained.

While the concerns of the parent or teacher may be valid, using retention as the solution is probably not the best option. Cumulative research on the effects of retention shows that the potential for negative effects usually outweighs the positive effects. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, ND) notes that among the negative effects may be:

- Most children do not "catch up" when they are held back.
- Although some retained students do better at first, these children often fall behind again in later grades.
- Students who are held back tend to get into trouble, dislike school, and feel badly about themselves more often than children who go on to the next grade.
- "Transition" kindergarten is a type of retention and is no more helpful than promotion to first grade.
- Many students who drop out of school were held back one, two, or more grades.

In addition to the conclusions NASP has drawn from the research, the weakened self-esteem that usually accompanies retention plays a role in how well the child may cope in the future. Research has shown that children view the thought of flunking a grade to be almost as stressful as the death of a parent or blindness (Sevener, 1990, p. 2).

In view of the larger body of research on retention, why do schools continue to retain children? Professors Smith and Shepard at the University of Colorado found that teachers frequently exaggerated the perceived benefits of retention. They believed that retention in early grades prevented problems or the stigma of failure later on. But teachers lacked real feedback on how well students were doing as they moved through school.

There are also some philosophical differences among professional educators. Some teachers believe that children mature and develop school readiness along with physiological unfolding, while other teachers believe that any child, of legal age, is teachable if the program is adapted to fit that child's individual needs. In one study, the teachers that leaned toward physiological readiness also leaned towards retention, while the other group of teachers were more likely to change their teaching methods to meet the individual child's needs (Sevener, 1990, p. 3).

Another difficulty for a teacher or parent, as he or she assesses the possibilities for the child, is the basic dilemma of choosing from the options that are available in their school or community. It is important for parents and teachers to become aware of some of the alternatives to retention. These include:

- *Ungraded classes.* In this environment, students learn at their own rate and advance to the next stage when they have mastered the required skills without the restriction of grade-level labeling.
- *Individualized instruction.* This method is tailored to the individual student's style of learning.
- *Tutoring.* Students are helped through individual attention in difficult academic areas throughout the year.
- *Home assistance programs.* These programs provide parents with structured specific information about ways to help their child academically with homework, sound study habits, or work habits.
- *Smaller class size.* Particularly in the primary years, small class size improves learning environments for all students.
- *Seeking alternative educational settings.* These may include summer school, learning laboratories with lots of opportunities for projects, and a "hands on" approach to learning.
- *Guidance Counseling.* In an advisor/advisee type of relationship, an "at risk" student may be identified earlier and given consistent support throughout his or her school career.
- *Delaying achievement testing that may lead to retention.* Achievement testing may be useful for identifying weak areas in the school curriculum and possibly areas where the child needs additional support; however, it should not be taken out of context of other information and become the deciding factor for grade placement for a child.

When parents are faced with retention as an option for their child, it is easy to feel angry or confused. However, parents can respond in several ways:

- Understand why the teacher is suggesting retention. Ask to see examples of your child's work compared to the work of other children of the same age. If the teacher is concerned about your child's maturity or behavior, ask for specific examples of her or his concern.
- Keep the teacher informed about your knowledge of the child. If your child was within the normal ranges of early developmental benchmarks, then let the teacher know. How does your child's school behavior compare with his or her at-home behavior? Are there similarities or large differences?

- Be aware of the stresses that may be affecting your child and keep the teacher informed. For example, if your family has a new baby in the house, or has recently moved, these life changes can affect the child's behavior for a short period of time.
- At home, ask the child about homework and give him or her a quiet place to study.
- Be certain that your child eats nutritious meals, gets enough sleep, and stays healthy.
- Request assistance from other support staff in the school. The school psychologist, school counselor, or special education staff may be able to identify an alternative intervention for your child.

Early intervention or identification of specific difficulties can assist the child with specific skills he or she may need to be successful in his or her school career. However, if retention still seems to be the most viable option suggested by the school, the National Association of School Psychologists (1988) notes that retention is not as likely to be harmful when students have the following characteristics:

- the student lacks serious deficits in the year prior to retention;
- the student has positive self-esteem and good social skills;
- the student shows signs of difficulty in school because of lack of opportunity for instruction rather than lack of ability;
- the student does not have serious social, emotional, or behavioral deficits.

Parents can work with school personnel to be sure that their child has a significantly different experience during the retained year than he or she had previously experienced. Some options might include a classroom with a lower teacher-student ratio, a different curriculum, or a different approach to learning. It might also be beneficial to move the child to another school. If retention is chosen, then the extra year the child spends should be individualized in such a way that it ensures the child's future success.

For more information about retention, see our Resources for Parents section.

Sources:

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National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (1988). Position statement. Bethesda, MD: NASP.

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Careful Planning for Successful Birthday Parties

by Debbie Reese

While children can't wait to celebrate their birthday with a festive party, many parents dread planning their child's birthday party. Children attend other birthday parties, and their expectations for their own party are easily influenced by extravagant affairs affluent parents provide for their children. In addition, the child may want to invite too many children, which can be overwhelming to both parents and children.

The following tips can help parents plan a party that will be manageable and enjoyable for the parent, child, and invited guests.

1. **Number of guests.**

   A rule of thumb is to invite the same number of children as the child's age plus one. For example, invite 4 children to the party of a 3 year old. After the child's fifth birthday, between 10 and 12 guests is a good number. Although parents often want to invite other adults to the child's birthday party, they should keep in mind that trying to maintain conversations with adult guests while also supervising the children can be overwhelming.

2. **Plan a Theme**

   If the child requests a party theme that focuses on a favorite television or film character, listen to the child. Such parties are fun for the children, but they need not be expensive. Consider purchasing a paper tablecloth with the character printed on it and then add color-coordinated cups, plates, and napkins that are less expensive than those printed with the character. Children can decorate plain paper bags with markers to use as their party favor bag.

3. **Games and Activities**

   Avoid competitive games and make sure there are prizes for all the invited guests. Alternate quiet with active game activities, scheduling a quiet activity before the eating of cake and ice cream. With a small group, a parent may be able to easily guide the children through simple craft activities such as making paper tissue flowers. Simple games include a bean bag toss and a balloon chase. A treasure hunt for items specially hidden according to the child's abilities to follow maps can also be a fun activity, with the treasure divided among the children.

4. **Food**

   By keeping the number of guests low and the menu simple, parents can keep costs down. The standard plate of chips and hot dogs is simple to prepare and inexpensive if there are only a few guests. Health conscious parents can offer turkey dogs if they choose, or they may wish to provide a vegetable platter of carrot sticks, celery sticks, cucumber slices, and green pepper slices.

5. **Family Birthday Traditions**

   Parents may wish to establish a family tradition tied to birthday celebrations. Some families use the same special candle on the cake each year, adding other candles to signify the increase in years. Others have special family dinners after which mementos of years past are brought out for a shared reminiscing time.

Many cultural groups observe specific birthdays with special celebrations. Within some Hispanic families, girls have an elaborate party called a "Quincinera" when they turn 15, which means she is old enough to date. Jewish girls have a Bat Mitzvah when they turn 12 or 13; boys have a Bar Mitzvah when they turn 13. These events mark the transition to religious adulthood.

Final Comments

Remember who the birthday is for! Children want to have fun, not eat lots of food. Spending a lot of money to ensure the children have fun is not necessary. Simple activities such as bottles of bubbles and balloons are still a big party hit.

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese

Sources:

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Fathers! Grandfathers! Significant Males! Read to children!

In the United States, it is widely observed that girls score better on standardized reading tests and are less likely than boys to be placed in remedial reading and special education classrooms.

Intrigued by the fact that the same observation is not true in other countries (e.g., Germany, Nigeria, Canada, England, Israel, and Finland), Dr. Donald D. Pottorff of Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, conducted a survey of children in grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 in rural, urban, and suburban schools.

Pottorff's study found that all the children responding to the survey reported that girls were better at reading books, reading to younger children, and writing stories. Furthermore, these children reported that their mothers were more likely to read books and magazines in addition to reading books to the children, while fathers were more likely to read the newspaper.

Pottorff's conclusions suggest that children in the United States view reading as gender appropriate for girls, but not for boys. He suggests that fathers, grandfathers, and other significant males need to read to children in the home at an early age as one way of encouraging boys to read more.

Source:

Boys and books. (1996, November 6). *Education Week*, 16(10), p. 24.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Student Scholarships and Awards

Listed below are several different scholarships and awards students may be interested in pursuing.

1. **The Fulbright Young Essayist Awards.**

   A new scholarship program open to students in grades 7-12 across the nation, this award is sponsored by the United States Information Agency and the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, Inc. For their essays, students select from three different questions arranged by grade level. The questions direct students to explore international issues and cross-cultural experiences.

   Essays are due on January 18, 1997. Awards ranging from $500 to $2,500 will be presented in the form of bonds presented when the student completes high school. Twelve essays will be selected to receive the award.

   For more information, contact:

   Alliance for Young Artists and Writers
   555 Broadway
   New York, NY 10012-3999
   212-343-6493
   Web site: http://www.usia.gov/education/fulbright50/contest.htm

2. **Horace Mann Scholarships**

   This program offers $40,000 in awards to college-bound seniors in high school who are children of public school employees. Students must have at least a B average and score at least 23 on the ACT or 1,000 on the SAT test. Awards include one $20,000 scholarship, three $4,000 scholarships, and eight $1,000 scholarships.

   For more information, contact:

   Horace Mann Scholarship Program
   P.O. Box 20490
   Springfield, IL 62708
   Web site: http://www.horaceman.com

3. **Kaplan/Newsweek "My Turn" Essay**

   This contest is sponsored by Kaplan Educational Centers and Newsweek magazine. Students in high school may submit a 500- to 1,000-word essay about their solution to issues that will affect the quality of life in America in the 21st century.

   Ten winners will be selected to receive $1,000 scholarships. The student winning first prize will also receive free Kaplan PSAT, SAT, or ACT course, book, or software products. Winning essays will be published in Newsweek's Education Program book *My Turn Essays: Student Reflections*. The deadline is March 7, 1997.

For more information, contact:

Kaplan Education Centers
1-800-KAP-TEST
1-800-527-8378

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese

Source:

Deadlines. (1996, November 20). *Education Week*, p. 41.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Of Interest

Important Theme Weeks This Winter on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood

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Each Mister Rogers' Neighborhood week focuses on a theme important in childhood. Over the course of a broadcast year, the Neighborhood offers 260 different episodes (or 52 themes a year). This winter includes the following themes:

December 30, 1996-January 3, 1997
"When Parents Go To Work" January 6-10, 1997
"Imaginary Friends"

January 13-17, 1997
"Up & Down"

January 20-24, 1997
"Then & Now"
Focuses on time and change.

January 27-31, 1997
"Things To Wear"

February 3-7, 1997
"Going Away & Coming Back"
Features comings and goings and the different kinds of vehicles that take us away and bring us back again.

February 10-14, 1997
"Love"

February 17-21, 1997
"Sharing (Premiere)"
An all-new week focusing on sharing ideas, interests, and feelings as well as toys.

February 24-28, 1997
"Fast & Slow"

March 3-7, 1997
"Everybody's Special"

March 10-13, 1997
"Change"

March 17-21, 1997
"Helping"

March 24-28, 1997
"Brave & Strong"

March 31-April 4, 1997
"Mouths & Feelings"
Features a trip to the dentist and two factory videos (how people make toothbrushes and how people make toothpaste).

April 7-11, 1997
"Fun & Games"

April 14-18, 1997
"Environment"

April 21-25, 1997
"Making an Opera"

April 28-30, 1997
"Divorce"

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

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1. GUIDE BOOK TO GIFT BOOKS: An Annotated List of Books for Youth

Developed by the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, this small guide contains recommended reviews from the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* over the last four years. All the titles met strict guidelines for high literary quality and enjoyability. The categories are broken down into Picture Books for 2-5 years, Young Readers for 6-8 years, Middle Readers for 9-12 years, Older Readers for 13-18 years, and books for all ages. (Cost: $2.50.)

Publications Office
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
501 E. Daniel
Champaign, IL 61820

2. MATERNITY MINUTES

This publication released by Vida Health Communications features a topic and a health issue related to pregnancy, birth, or recovery. It also provides information on the resources available through Vida Health, such as videos on breast-feeding, newborn care, parenting the newborn, cesarian section, and recovery. (Cost of the items varies. MATERNITY MINUTES is free.)

Vida Health Communications
6 Bigelow St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: 617-864-4334
Fax: 617-864-7862
E-mail: VidaHealth@aol.com

3. PROJECT FUTURE

PROJECT FUTURE is a comprehensive, three-program, six-part video series addressing the needs of adolescents who are continuing their pregnancies and going on to become parents. These videos are designed to provide emotional support and to teach basic parenting skills. They are entitled: (1) "Your Pregnancy Your Plan," (2) "Giving Birth to Your Baby," and (3) "Your New Baby, Your New Life." (Cost for the series is $595. Free preview is available.)

Vida Health Communications
6 Bigelow St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: 617-864-4334
Fax: 617-864-7862
E-mail: VidaHealth@aol.com

4. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY YOUTH

This publication is produced by the Search Institute, which seeks to motivate individuals, organizations, and their leaders to join together to nurture competent, caring, and responsible children and adolescents. Their major goals are: (1) national awareness, (2) community mobilization, (3) organizational action, (4) family involvement, (5) citizen engagement, and (6) youth empowerment. The guide provides more information on the research in this area and resources available for community action. (Free.)

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Minneapolis, MN 55415
Telephone: 612-376-8955
Fax: 612-376-8956

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. **Tasker, Mary. (1995). *How Can I Tell You?: Secrecy and Disclosure with Children when a Family Member Has AIDS*. Maternal and Child Program, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services. Available from: Institute for Family-Centered Care, 7900 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 405, Bethesda, MD 20814.**

   This publication has been written to assist families and the professionals who work with families as they explore the complex issues that surround the disclosure of HIV diagnosis in children. It provides examples of ways families have responded to the diagnosis, including keeping it a secret, and the burden which that response created. Also discussed are the stigma and stages associated with disclosure.

2. **Itzkoff, Seymour W. (1996). *Children Learning To Read: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*. Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Rd. West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 ($35). PSO24548**

   This nontechnical guide for parents and teachers examines learning to read--from infant's babbling to the fluent reading of children reading independently for pleasure. The chapters range from "Baby speaks" in chapter one to alphabet development, reading readiness, phonics and decoding, and identifying readiness. The text also looks at other reading issues, including dyslexia and hyperlexia.

3. **Riera, Michael. (1995). *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers*. Celestial Arts, P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707 ($12.95, plus shipping and handling). PSO24511**

   This guide to parenting high-school-age adolescents is intended to help parents restructure the typically adversarial relationship between parent and teenager by replacing the "parent as manager" role with the "parent as consultant" role. The text is question-driven, comprised of a series of responses to questions commonly asked by parents and other adults who work closely with adolescents. Examples include: (1) "What are fair punishments when teenagers break the rules?"; (2) "What can I do to help my teenager improve his poor grades?"; and (3) "How can we expect our 16-year-old daughter to be ready to drive a car when she can't even keep her room clean?" Potentially destructive behavior is also explored. In addition to three initial chapters that provide overviews of the parent-adolescent relationship, the adolescent world, and high school, remaining chapters include: (1) "Graduation"; (2) "Limits and Structure"; (3) "Natural Consequences"; (4) "Alcohol, Drugs, and Parties"; (5) "Academics, Grades, and Motivation"; (6) "Sex and Romance"; (7) "Being Gay"; (8) "Television, Music, and Computers"; (9) "Sports and Extracurricular Activities"; (10) "Making Friends"; (11) "The Driver's License"; (12) "Eating Modifications and Eating Disorders"; (13) "Adolescent Grieving"; (14) "Divorce"; (15) "Remarriage and Blended Families"; (16) "Single Parenting"; (17) "Parent Mental Health"; (18) "Professional Help"; and (19) "Concluding Remarks." Contains 24 references.

4. **Lansky, Vicki. (1996). *Vicki Lansky's Divorce Book for Parents: Helping Your Children Cope***

***with Divorce and Its Aftermath*. The Book Peddlers, 18326 Minnetonka Blvd., Deephaven, MN 55391 ($5.99, plus $2.75 postage and handling). PSO24517**

This book provides advice on minimizing the negative effects of divorce on children, including what normal behavior to expect, what language to use and not use, and what legal and custody issues will affect the child. The book contains eight chapters: Chapter 1, "The Decision to Separate," covers such topics as breaking the news to children, trial separations, and telling other people of the divorce. Chapter 2, "How Will the Children Take It?," explores issues such as answering "why" questions, anticipating age differences, addressing issues of gay parents, obtaining professional help, and rebuilding children's self-esteem. Chapter 3, "D-Day: Departure Day," includes discussion of splitting up household goods, post-parting depression, and the possibility of reconciliation. Chapter 4, "Words Matter: Divorce-Speak," explains how to talk to--and about--an ex-spouse and about the new situation. Chapter 5, "The Issues: Money, Legalities, Custody," covers various facets of the divorce process from a legal standpoint. Chapter 6, "Sole Custody and the Noncustodial Parent," explores such issues as coping with being a part-time parent and dealing with an unreliable parent. Chapter 7, "Shared Parenting (aka Joint Custody)," discusses positive and negative aspects of this arrangement and how to set up ground rules. Chapter 8, "Looking Down the Road," covers a range of topics, including name changes, guilt, children of divorce in the classroom, holidays and extended family members, and dating. Contains 62 references.

5. **Forehand, Rex; Long, Nicholas. (1996). *Parenting the Strong-Willed Child: The Clinically Proven Five-Week Program for Parents of Two- to Six-Year-Olds*. Contemporary Books, Two Prudential Plaza, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601-6790 ($12.95, plus shipping and handling).**

Parenting is one the most difficult tasks that adults face, and parenting strong-willed children can be even more difficult and frustrating. Parents of strong-willed children are often frustrated by their children s behavior as well as the lack of support and resources to help them deal with their children. This book describes a self-guided program for managing disruptive young children, based upon a clinical treatment program for which typical results include improved parent-child relationships, children who mind their parents more, and fewer child behavior problems at home and in other settings, such as preschool. The sections of the book are: (1) "Understanding Your Strong-Willed Child s Behavior"; (2) "Addressing Strong-Willed Behavior: A Five-Week Program," including determining whether a child's behavior needs to be changed and skill building in the five areas covered by the program--attending, rewarding, ignoring, giving directions, and using time-outs; (3) "Creating a Positive Climate for Behavior Change," including ways to create a more positive home environment, to improve communication skills, to develop more patience, and to build self-esteem; and (4) "Solving Some Common Behavior Problems: Additional Recommendations," discussing specific problem behaviors including temper tantrums, aggression, mealtime problems, bedtime and sleep problems, lying, and sibling rivalry.

6. **Prestine, Joan Singleton. (1996). *Mom and Dad Break Up [and] Helping Children Understand Divorce: A Practical Resource Guide for "Mom and Dad Break Up*." Fearon Teacher Aids, Parsippany, NJ. PSO24498**

Based on the recognition that nearly all children will experience the direct or indirect effects of divorce through their relatives or friends, and that many children do not openly share their feelings, this book is a guide to help adults assist children in understanding and dealing with the emotions arising from the experience of divorce. An introductory section discusses common effects of divorce on children of different ages and the importance of communication. The guide provides suggestions and activities for communicating with children, recognizing their feelings, and helping them cope constructively with the changes that come with divorce as presented in the included picture book. The picture book presents the story of a young boy dealing with his parent's divorce. The bulk of the guide is devoted to activities related to particular emotions presented in the picture book: shock, discouragement, anger, sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, guilt, helplessness, illness, fear, and acceptance. An annotated bibliography of parent resources and books for children is included. A list of support groups concludes the publication.

7. **Pipher, Mary. (1994).** ***Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*****. Ballantine Books, 201 East 50th St., New York, NY 10022 (U.S., $12.50; Canada, $17.50). PS024836**

   More American adolescent girls today are prey to depression, eating disorders, addictions, and suicide attempts than ever before. This book is an exploration of the underlying causes of this disturbing phenomena, structured around therapy case studies of various teenage girls. It argues that despite the women's movement, adolescent females today are coming of age in a girl-poisoning culture, saturated with sexualized and sexist media images and expectations. This environment causes girls to stifle their creative spirit and natural impulses and ultimately destroys their self-esteem. The book's 15 chapters cover theoretical and developmental issues of adolescence, the importance of family background, the roles of mothers and fathers, depression, societal pressures to be thin and beautiful, drug and alcohol use, sex and violence, and the differences between the world that female adolescents face today and the one their parents may have known. (Contains a list of recommended reading.)

8. **Buchanan, Christy M.; et al. (1996).** ***Adolescents after Divorce*****. Harvard University Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138-1423; telephone: U.S. and Canada, 800-448-2242; International, 617-495-2480; fax: U.S. and Canada, 800-962-4983; International, 617-495-8924 ($39.95). PS024800**

   The decision to divorce is grueling for most parents, who usually worry heavily about the impact of divorce on their children. The study described in this book was undertaken to discover what circumstances of family life after divorce are associated with good adjustment on the part of children, so that both parents and professionals can enhance children's development. Specifically, a central concern was to compare and contrast the three major residential arrangements (primary mother-, primary father-, and dual-residence) with respect to adolescents' experiences and adjustment. Effects of the presence of new parental partners were also explored. The book is divided into three main parts. Chapters 1-3 set out the goals and methods of the study and discuss the assessment of family processes, inter-parental relationships, and adolescent adjustment. A general picture of the lives of the study's adolescent subjects is also presented. Chapters 4-7 compare the three residential arrangements with respect to adolescent adjustment, as well as the contextual factors, interpersonal relationships, and forms of parental control and management that prevail in each. Chapters 8-12 explicitly examine the experience of participating in two different parental households, including visitation, the relationship with the nonresidential parent, feeling conflicted, and inconsistency in households' patterns of control and management. Finally, Chapter 13 summarizes the main findings and considers their implications. The summary indicates only minor differences among the three residential groups, on the average, in adolescent adjustment. What differences there were favored the adolescents in dual residence, and indicated somewhat more adjustment difficulties among father-resident adolescents. Contains 153 references.

9. ***Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth: 1996*****. (1996, April). Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (DHHS), Washington, DC. Available from: GPO, Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402-9328.**

PSO24853

This is the first edition of what is intended to be an annual, comprehensive report on trends in the well-being of America's children and youth. It contains two sections: the first is a quick-reference guide describing national trends for 74 indicators of child and youth well-being based on data collected by the federal government. The information provided for each indicator includes one or more tables documenting recent historical trends and important population sub-group differences, graphics to highlight key trends and group contrasts, and accompanying text that briefly describes the importance of each indicator and highlights the most salient features of the data. The indicators are organized into five substantive areas: (1) population, family, and neighborhood; (2) economic security; (3) health conditions and health care; (4) social development, behavioral health, and teen fertility; and (5) education and achievement. The second section of the report offers a narrative treatment of a particular topic affecting the well-being of children and youth. This edition's article, by Donald J. Hernandez, offers a review of trends in, and detailed historical tables on, the socio-demographic characteristics of children, youth, and their families. Contains 28 references.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

National Reye's Syndrome Foundation

The National Reye's Syndrome Foundation (NSRF) is a not-for-profit health agency, organized in 1974 to (1) increase public awareness about Reye's Syndrome through brochures, bulletins, public service announcements on television and radio, and through a speakers bureau that provides speakers for groups and organizations free of charge; (2) support research into the cause, treatment, and prevention of this disease; and (3) provide support and guidance to families experiencing the trauma associated with Reye's Syndrome.

Reye's Syndrome is a disease that can occur at any age but that primarily affects children. It usually occurs when the child is recovering from a viral infection such as the flu, chicken pox, or an upper respiratory infection. Symptoms are persistent vomiting, listlessness, irritability, disorientation, delirium, and loss of consciousness. Medical treatment must begin immediately to ward off damage to the brain and/or liver and to prevent possible death. Because medical studies have shown that aspirin and aspirin-containing medications commonly used to treat viral illnesses increase the chance of developing Reye's Syndrome, parents are STRONGLY advised not to give their children aspirin or aspirin-containing medications.

Contact:
National Reye's Syndrome Foundation
P.O Box 829
Bryan, Ohio 43506
Telephone: 419-636-3366
800-233-7393

Family Math

Family Math is a professional outreach program, sponsored by the University of California, that provides a way for adults to become positively involved in their child's mathematics education.

Family Math courses and two-day workshops are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese and are offered in almost every state; Washington, D.C.; Australia; Canada; Costa Rica; New Zealand; Puerto Rico; Sweden; and Venezuela.

The Family Math program provides parents with activities and materials to use with their children to help them develop problem-solving skills and mathematics communication skills. The program supplements the school curriculum.

Contact:

Family Math
Lawrence Hall of Science
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-5200
Telephone: 510-642-1823

Intercultural Development Research Association

Founded in 1963, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a private not-for-profit organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of every student, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or disability, to receive a quality education.

Through several education-related federally funded programs, IDRA provides parents and schools with technical assistance in the areas of equity, literacy, and desegregation.

IDRA's publications include a newsletter and other publications related to education, including "Questions and Answers about Bilingual Education." This publication identifies 23 frequently asked questions and provides brief, yet complete, answers to help non-educators clarify their understandings of bilingual education.

Contact:
Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
Telephone: 210-684-8180

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

ASSETS: The Magazine of Ideas for Healthy Communities & Healthy Youth

Produced by the Search Institute, this magazine is useful for people and organizations working to advance the well-being of youth in the context of their family and community. The magazine features ideas, stories, resources, and activities of schools, congregations, parents, businesses, and community partnerships that are geared to resiliency, prevention, and youth leadership development. Published quarterly. Cost is $14.50 for a one-year subscription.

Contact:
Assets Magazine
P.O. Box 21652
Eagan, MN 55121-9794
Telephone: 800-869-6882

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA PARENT

Published by Parenting Publications of America, this regional newspaper has many articles of interest to parents, particularly in the California area. The November 1996 issue features articles on ways to resolve anger in children, fair expectations of children, and strategies for eating out as a family. Published monthly. Cost is $15.00 for a one-year subscription delivered to your home.

Contact:
Subscriptions
Central California Parent
2037 W. Bullard #131
Fresno, CA 93711-1200

CHILD CARE CHAT

This newsletter is written with the family day care provider in mind. The reader will receive information regarding monthly wages, ideas for games and cooking, and certificates. There will also be tips on ways to communicate with parents. Published quarterly. Cost is $10.00 per year for a one-year subscription.

Contact:
Child Care Chat
Stenhjem's Day Care

1525 36 1/2 Ave. S
Fargo, ND 58104

HOOSIER PARENT

Focusing on parents in the Indiana area, this magazine features topics of interest to parents. The October issue features nutrition and exercise tips for pregnancy, investment ideas, and a feature on twins. Published monthly. Distributed free in the Evansville area.

Contact:
Hoosier Parent Foundation
5108 Washington Ave.
Evansville, IN 47715
Telephone: 812-473-0854

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: National Families in Action

Description: The goal of National Families in Action is to help parents prevent drug abuse at home and in their community. Through publications, networking, and collaboration efforts, work in the suburbs and the inner-city, and ongoing efforts to understand and describe what scientists are learning about drug effects, National Families in Action has carried the prevention message to all corners of the United States and abroad.

The site offers the latest information about the effects of drugs; connections to specific cultural/ethnic groups for information and help; a forum for asking questions about drugs to the experts; a catalog of publications for parents, teachers, students, and others; and additional resources for assistance.

Address: http://www.emory.edu/NFIA/

Name: Family Education Network

Sponsor: Educational Publishing Group

Description: The Family Education Network (FEN) is a for-profit membership organization that has recruited several companies and publications to supply content, including the *Exceptional Parent*, *Education Today*, and the Princeton Review test-preparation company. The purpose of the FEN is to provide education information, resources, and services for families; connect parents with experts and other parents for advice and support; and empower parents to speak out on education issues. It is designed as on online community center for parents with children up to age 18.

The site features the following sections: (1) Learning at School; (2) Learning at Home, (3) Learning Tools (books, software); (4) Learning Activities; (5) Learning for Kids; (6) Special Needs; (7) Issues and Action. In addition, a discussion section provides a forum for online discussions on topical issues for parents and encourages political advocacy.

Address: http://familyeducation.com/

Name: March of Dimes

Description: The March of Dimes is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health of babies by reducing birth defects and infant mortality.

The site provides information on having a healthy baby and what to do if there is a problem. Features include: (1) Information on Having a Healthy Baby; (2) Birth Defects Information; (3) Infant Health Statistics; (4) Publications; and (5) Description of Worksite Programs.

Address: http://www.modimes.org

Name: The Computer Museum Guide to the Best Software for Kids and Parents

Sponsor: The Computer Museum Network

Description: The Computer Museum Guide to the Best Software for Kids and Parents was developed by a team of authors, kids, and parents who evaluated the software that is available. This guide provides recommendations for software that is considered good for children ages 2-12. The guide can be purchased for $16 (plus $2 shipping & handling) through the Computer Museum Guide Web site.

Other features include: (1) Parent Tips, which provides short articles and software updates for parents; (2) Reviews, which is divided according to your child's age and includes the criteria used for evaluation; (3) Best Lists, which includes lists for kids, lists for kids and parents, and a "Best of the New" list; and (4) Talk to Us, which offers users the opportunity to provide opinions, suggestions, recommendations, or ask questions.

Address: http://www.tcm.org/resources/kdscomps/guide/guide-about.html

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Name: Mothers' Voices: United To End AIDS

Description: Mothers' Voices is a national grassroots network of mothers who have mobilized to promote public policies that advance the efforts for HIV and AIDS education, prevention, research, treatment, and ultimately a cure. The Mothers' Voices site features articles related to timely topics, an action alert network that features action items (such as writing to your congressman), various AIDS-related information and facts, a mother-to-mother discussion area, an events calendar, and links to other Web resources.

Mother's Voices also provides a feature on how to talk to your children about AIDS. In this section, AIDS-related information and "what you can say" suggestions are provided.

Address: http://www.mvoices.org/

Name: Bright Horizons

Sponsor: Drawbridge, Inc.

Description: Bright Horizons consists of more than 125 child care centers throughout the United States and is composed of a group of professional managers, education, and child care specialists.

The Bright Horizons Web site offers a listing of its centers, information on various educational philosophies found in child care programs, professional development and accreditation information, and resources for worksite child care needs.

Address: http://www.brighthorizons.com/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

CALL FOR PAPERS

CONFERENCE: FAMILIES, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE

DATE: OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 1, 1997

PLACE: CHICAGO, IL

DEADLINE: ABSTRACTS ARE DUE BY MARCH 1, 1997

DESCRIPTION: The ERIC System and the National Parent Information Network are accepting 500-word abstracts of papers to be presented at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference in October 1997.

Abstracts will be accepted for the following conference strands:

- Using technology to link schools, families, and students
- TV and movies: Mass media effects on children and family life
- The Internet and its influence on family life
- Using technology to monitor children's activities
- Technology and disabilities: Effects on family life and learning
- Equity issues in family access to computer technology

Abstracts (200 words) may also be submitted for poster sessions that highlight particular projects or products related to the topics of the conference.

Abstracts may be submitted by postal mail or electronically to the addresses below.

CONTACT:

Anne Robertson, Program Chair
National Parent Information Network
ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 1-800-583-4135 or 217-333-1386
Fax: 217-333-3767
E-mail: ericeece@uiuc.edu

CONFERENCE: Meeting the Needs of Young Children with Challenging Behaviors in the Early Childhood Environment

Date: January 17, 1997

Place:
Metairie, Louisiana
Quality Inn Hotel

Description: This is the Third Annual Region 1 Early Intervention Collaborative Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Phil Strain, who will discuss challenging behaviors at home and school. Teachers and parents are welcome to attend.

Contact:

David Smythe or Iris Johnston
Telephone: 504-942-8219

CONFERENCE: Character Education Partnership

Date: February 7-8, 1997

Place: San Diego, California

Description: Annual Forum on Character Education Partnership.

Contact:

809 Franklin St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-9515

CONFERENCE: Council for Exceptional Children

Date: February 13-15, 1997

Place: San Jose, California

Description: The Technology Conference of the Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

Contact:

750 Oakland Ave.
Suite 104
Oakland, CA 94611-4401

Telephone: 510-658-0119

CONFERENCE: Learning Disabilities Association of America

Date: February 19-22, 1997

Place: Chicago, Illinois

Description: International Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America

Contact:

4156 Library Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
Telephone: 412-341-1515

CONFERENCE: Fifth Annual Conference on Parent Education

Date: February 27-March 1, 1997

Place:
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Description: The Fifth Annual Conference on Parent Education. This conference is sponsored by the Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas.

Contact:

Amanda Barksdale at CCECM
PO Box 5344
Denton, TX 76203-0344
Telephone: 817-565-3484
Fax: 817-565-3801
E-mail: barksdal@scs.unt.edu

CONFERENCE: National PTA

Date: March 10-13, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Legislative Conference of the National PTA.

Contact:

700 N. Wabash Ave.
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 312-6670-6782

CONFERENCE: Children's Defense Fund

Date: March 11-15, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Annual Conference of the Children's Defense Fund.

Contact:

Children's Defense Fund
25 E. St., NW
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-662-3674

CONFERENCE: Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance

Date: March 20-22, 1997

Place: Orlando, Florida

Description: This is the Joint International Conference on Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance. General sessions, workshops, panels, exhibits, and networking activities will address the various forms of religious, racial, and ethnic intolerance among school-age chidren; programs which schools, communities, and churches may use to reduce intolerance; the legal and policy implications of creating and implementing various school and public policies on hate crimes; and programs for effective collaborations. The keynote speaker will be Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Contact:

Telephone: 1-800-537-4903
Fax: 941-778-6818
E-mail: 102630.2245@compuserve.com

CONFERENCE: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)

Date: April 16-19, 1997

Place:
Omni-Sheraton Hotel
Washington, DC

Description: The NCCCC conference features daily keynote speakers, tours of campus children's centers, a workshop track for new directors, and training for people interested in lobbying for change in Washington, DC. A special track for teachers will also be available.

Contact:

Gail Solit
Gallaudet University
Telephone: 202-651-5130
Fax: 202-651-5531
E-mail: gasolit@gallua.gallaudet.edu

CONFERENCE: Family Literacy: The Power and the Promise

Date: April 20-22, 1997

Place: Louisville, Kentucky

Description: This is the Sixth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy presented by the National Center for Family Literacy. Sessions will include such topics as what the future holds and family literacy's place in it; welfare reform and how it will affect family literacy programs; and the top thinkers in family literacy.

Contact:

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza
325 W. Main St., Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Telephone: 502-584-1133

CONFERENCE: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) "La Semana del Nino (Week of the Young Child)" Educator's Institute

Date: April 22-24, 1997

Place:
San Antonio, Texas
Omni Hotel

Description: The Fourth Annual IDRA early childhood education training institute. Featured topics include: restructuring for success, multi-age practices, the role of play in early childhood, and involving parents.

Contact:

Hilaria Bauer or Carol Chavez
Telephone: 210-684-8180

CONFERENCE: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities

Date: May 18-20, 1997

Place:
Miami, Florida
Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel

Description: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities is intended to provide a forum on best appropriate practices and services for all children and families; to build communities that value and support the diversity of families and caregivers in the nurturing of young children; to present innovation, leadership, and effective collaboration in working with and on behalf of children and families; and to showcase the most effective and highest quality services and programs for children and families.

Contact:

Luis Hernandez
Telephone: 305-375-4670

CONFERENCE: National Head Start Association

Date: May 28-31, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: This is the Annual Conference of the National Head Start Association.

Contact:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St., Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-0875

Return to the Parent News for January 1997 contents page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for February 1997

- What's New on NPIN

- February's Feature:
  Partnerships for Student Success
  by Dr. Don Davies
  Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

- Community Spotlight:
  Providing Services for Teen Parents: An Innovative Approach in Portland, Oregon
  by Mary Karter

- Of Interest
    - *Choosing a Sitter* by Dr. Jeanne Beckman
    - *TV Tune Out '97*
    - *"Too Young for Kindergarten!" What Does the Research Say?* by Debbie Reese
    - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage* by Dorothy G. Singer
    - *Free Publication: Because You Love Them: A Parent's Planning Guide*
    - *Where Families Can Obtain Tax Information*
    - *Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences* by Dawn Ramsburg

- Resources for Parents
    - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
    - Book Summaries and Reviews
    - Organizations
    - Web Sites

- The Parenting Calendar

Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

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Parent News for February 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during January 1997

NPIN now has a search feature by which you can search for words in the full text of any document on NPIN. To use the search feature, return to the NPIN Home Page and choose *Search NPIN* from the menu.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

- *Helping Your Child Succeed in School* (in the "Helping Children Learn at Home" section; also in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section)
  This brochure provides information on where, what, and how children learn and on what messages to send children. The brochure also describes activities for parents to do with children aged 5-7, 7-9, and 9-11 are described.
- *Helping Your Child Use the Library* (in the "Helping Children Learn at Home" section; also in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section)
  This brochure offers tips about getting children interested in the library and about visiting the library. The brochure provides information about library services, servcies for special children, and adult services.
- *Keep Your Baby's Teeth Healthy! Helpful Hints for Parents* (in the "Children's Health and Nutrition" section")
  Lists four things parents can do to keep their child's teeth healthy and free from baby bottle tooth decay.
- *Let's Do Homework* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section; also in the "Helping Children Learn at Home" section)
  This text explains four things parents can do to help their children with homework. A checklist is included.
- *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities. Joint Home-School Learning Activities* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section")
  After discussing how learning begins at home, this chapter provides information on homework and learning activities, how parents can help with homework, special home-school learning projects, and learning resources.
- *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities. Parent Education Activities and Workshops* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section")
  Explains that effective parent involvement programs include a parent education component. Provides hints on topics for parent education activities, the use of various teaching methods and materials, and parent workshop speakers.
- *Reducing Baby Bottle Tooth Decay* (in the "Children's Health and Nutrition" section")
  Provides information on baby bottle tooth decay (BBTD), including prevalence, recommendations for intervention programs, adult practices to reduce the likelihood of BBTD, and typical activities that have successfully reduced BBTD.
- *What Do Parents Want to Know about Alternative Assessment?* (in the "Early Childhood - Learning" section; also in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section)
  This text answers questions such as, Why change from traditional ways of assessing children?, What are the benefits for students?, and What can parents expect to see with this new form of assessment?

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *How Can I Tell You?: Secrecy and Disclosure with Children When a Family Member Has AIDS,* from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- *Children Learning To Read: A Guide for Parents and Teachers,* by Seymour W. Itzkoff.
- *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers,* by Michael Riera, Michael.
- *Vicki Lansky's Divorce Book for Parents: Helping Your Children Cope with Divorce and Its Aftermath,* by Vicki Lansky.
- *Parenting the Strong-Willed Child: The Clinically Proven Five-Week Program for Parents of Two- to Six-Year-Olds,* by Rex Forehand and Nicholas Long.
- *Mom and Dad Break Up [and] Helping Children Understand Divorce: A Practical Resource Guide for "Mom and Dad Break Up,* by Joan Singleton Prestine.
- *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls,* by Mary Pipher.
- *Adolescents after Divorce,* by Christy M. Buchanan and others.
- *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth: 1996,* from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *ASSETS: The Magazine of Ideas for Healthy Communities & Healthy Youth*
- *Central California Parent*
- *Child Care Chat*
- *Hoosier Parent*

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- National Reye's Syndrome Foundation
- Family Math
- Intercultural Development Research Association

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Special Feature

Partnerships for Student Success: What We Have Learned about Policies To Increase Student Achievement through School Partnerships with Families and Communities

by Don Davies, Co-Director, Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

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Why Partnerships?

> School Board members and school administrators tell us that the main benefit of stronger ties with families and communities is increased academic achievement by students. Parent and community partnerships can help to boost academic achievement from preschool through high school. Involved parents and the community will be more likely to support the schools' reform efforts.

An Invitation

We invite every American school board, superintendent, and principal to act now to plan and implement a comprehensive program of family and community partnerships aimed at improving the academic achievement and social success of all of their students.

We have learned a great deal from our research and years of work in schools about why school partnerships with families and communities are important and how to make them work under various conditions. Different strategies and practices will affect different outcomes. But if strategies for collaboration are well planned, aimed at appropriate goals, and well implemented, they can have many benefits.

Children's chances for success in school and life are likely to be improved. Their parents and other family members can also gain skills, knowledge, and confidence that will help them in rearing children, improving their economic condition, and being good citizens. When families are informed about how the teacher and the school are supporting the child's efforts to learn, family expectations for children's success go up. Teachers and schools are also helped. When families see that teachers communicate frequently and positively with them, they give higher ratings to the teachers and the schools. Families are more likely to understand the goals of the teacher and the school and to be more supportive of proposed changes.

School reform requires family and community support. Without such support, schools' efforts to set higher standards, restructure schedules, rules, and procedures, and introduce different curriculum or teaching methods are not likely to succeed. Families and community residents and agencies who see themselves as partners with the schools are more likely to support educators' efforts to gain increased financial support.

Community agencies and institutions also can benefit when they collaborate effectively with schools. They can reach more of their constituents, increase public support for their work, sometimes realize cost-savings, and gain access to school facilities and expertise. In some cases, school-based collaboration may be an opportunity to coordinate their services with other community organizations.

Research and experience support the belief that partnerships between schools, families, and communities are a powerful tool to achieve better schools. But, such partnerships are not a substitute for good schools and effective teaching.

Practical Lessons

- **Good partnerships can be formed in all kinds of schools, from preschool through high school.** They can work in all kinds of communities--urban, suburban, and rural--regardless of level of affluence or racial, ethnic, or religious composition.
- **Written policies at both the district and school level that set guidelines and requirements for collaboration make a difference.** So does what school boards, superintendents, and principals say and do in support.
- **Not all good partnerships look the same.** Successful partnerships exhibit as much variety as the local conditions that spawn them. Partnerships work best when they recognize differences among families, communities, cultures, states, and regions.

Despite the benefits, the lessons of research, and the widespread bipartisan acceptance of the idea of parent involvement and school-family-community collaboration, most American public schools and school systems have not yet acted to adopt and enforce clear policies for comprehensive programs of partnership. Collaboration is not yet the standard way of working in most schools. School reform efforts often continue to be launched without adequate community ownership. Many schools still keep parents and the community at arms length. We believe that the remaining years of this century are the time to "stop talking and start digging" to make school-family-community collaboration the rule rather than the exception. We draw from our research and work in the schools a few key principles and recommendations as guideposts for those who are ready to act.

Basic Principles

Reciprocity

Successful partnerships are based on reciprocity. This principle means that all the key parts of the child's world--school, family, community--have both unique and overlapping responsibilities and authority for children's learning and development.

The family remains the primary institution within which children are nurtured, shaped, and readied for an independent role in life. Regardless of their size or composition, families have the primary obligation for the protection, health, and education of their own children. Families must be held accountable for meeting their obligations. But they often need help. Although some are struggling more than others, nearly all of today's families at one time or another need support from the community and from the schools themselves.

The obligations of schools for the education and socialization of the community's young are obvious and central. Schools must be held accountable for meeting those obligations, but they cannot do their job alone. They need the help and support of families and of community agencies and institutions.

Communities have traditional obligations to provide a safe and orderly environment in which families and children can satisfy their basic needs and in which schools can thrive. The community--through its government, public and private agencies, and employers--offers its citizens protection, work, and recreation as well as an environment in which a healthy civic culture can develop. The community, in all of its parts, must be held accountable by residents, taxpayers, and voters for meeting its obligations to children and their families. But communities need the help of productive educational institutions and residents who contribute to the common good as democratic citizens.

Reciprocity means clear relationships and mutual obligations between all the parts of the child's world. To put this concept into practice requires formal and informal structures and agreements. All the parts of the child's world need to accept their mutual and separate obligations.

Democratic Process

Developing effective partnerships requires attention to some of the essential elements of democratic process. These elements include recognizing different interests, respecting all participants regardless of color, religion, or educational status, and respecting minority viewpoints. In addition, conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and compromise are necessary aspects of democratic process.

Schools make a substantial contribution to the education of children and the community when they practice democratic principles in their day-to-day operations and in the ways they involve families and communities. Effective democratic decision making includes all families and all sectors of the community, across lines of race, language, social class, income, and other factors that sometimes separate people.

A good place to start is for schools to bring together teachers and other educators with families, students, and community representatives to discuss and agree on mutually important goals for children, schools, and the community and then to make collaborative plans to achieve them.

Diverse Opportunities

Effective programs of school-family-community collaboration provide a menu of opportunities, geared to the diverse needs of families and their children and to the particular conditions of each school and school district. What works best is a plan that is integrated with the other important objectives of the school.

Joyce Epstein, Co-Director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, has developed and tested six categories of partnership activities which have been useful to schools seeking to create comprehensive partnerships.

A comprehensive program of partnerships will include such elements as parent education and family support, family members and community members acting as volunteers in the school, home-school communication, strategies that foster children's learning at home and in community settings, decision-making and governance mechanisms, and myriad kinds of school-community exchanges.

Providing a menu of opportunities for partnership will help schools reach and involve even the most needy and overlooked families in the school's community.

Types Of Family-Community-School Partnerships

Type 1: Basic obligations of families. Schools help families meet their basic obligations for providing for children's health and safety, developing parenting skills, and developing child-rearing approaches that prepare children for school and that maintain healthy child development across grades. Good examples of this type are family support and home visiting programs.

Type 2: Basic obligations of schools for communication. Schools are responsible for communicating with families about school programs and children's progress and for encouraging two-way communication between home and school. Communications include the notices, phone calls, visits, report cards, and conferences that many schools provide as well as more innovative ways to promote two-way home-school communication.

Type 3: Involvement at school. Parents and other volunteers assist educators and children in classrooms and other areas of the school in many different ways and also come to the school to support student performances and activities, including sports events.

Type 4: Involvement in learning activities at home. Teachers request and guide parents to monitor and assist their own children at home. Schools enable families to understand how to help their own children at home by providing information on academic and other skills, with directions on how to monitor, discuss, and help with homework and practice and reinforce needed skills.

Type 5: Involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy. Parents and others in the community participate in parent associations, advisory councils and policy boards, school site management teams, or other committees and community organizations. Parents also become activists in independent advocacy groups in the community. Schools assist family members to be leaders and representatives by training them in decision-making skills and by including parents as true, not token, contributors to school decisions, and by providing information to community advocacy groups so they may knowledgeably address issues of school improvement.

Type 6: Collaboration and exchange with community organizations. Schools collaborate with agencies, businesses, cultural organizations, and other groups to share responsibility for children's education and future success. Collaboration includes school programs that provide or coordinate child and family access to community and support services, such as before- and after-school care, health services, cultural events, and other programs. Schools also provide services, facilities, and expertise to the community.

(The descriptions above were adapted from a typology developed by Joyce Epstein. (1992). *School and Family Partnerships*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning.)

Recommendations

The following recommendations which flow from research and experience will help schools beginning to develop a culture of collaboration. Such a culture should become "the way we do things around here" in a school and a school district, rather than a project, a series of events, or a funding requirement.

Projects and funding may come and go, but a school and school district culture can persist over time and have a positive influence on all who are involved. Changing "the way we do things around here" takes time, can't be mandated, but can be encouraged by example, incentives, recognition, rewards, and clear written policies.

A Culture Of Collaboration

The Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School, a small racially and ethnically diverse school in Boston that integrates special needs children into regular classrooms, has--over a four-year period--developed a new culture of collaboration. Family members are involved in all aspects of the school's life. The principal and teachers, as a matter of course, reach out to community resources. Parent volunteers are trained to be "home visitors" who visit all families who are new to the school. The school's primary decision-making body consists of an equal number of parents and educators working on curriculum, personnel, and budget matters. Members are elected annually and meet monthly.

Contact: Bill Henderson, Principal, Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School, 1669 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester, MA 02122; telephone: 617-635-8725; fax: 617-635-8728.

Recommendation One

Adopt clear written policies on school-family-community collaboration and back up the policies with direct support.

School districts should offer more than verbal support for school-family-community partnerships.

Written district policies provide an institutionally and politically sanctioned framework for action at the school and community level.

Only a handful of the nation's 16,000 school districts actually have specific written policies about partnership. Clear, written policies at the school building level are also needed to support and extend district policies. Written policies are needed because school board members, superintendents, and principals change.

Having written policies is not enough, however. They must be enforced and backed up with financial support when it is needed and with direct on-site assistance to schools planning and carrying out partnership programs.

Most schools need hands-on help as they plan and put partnership programs into practice. They shouldn't have to start from scratch. Schools will benefit from knowing about successful models and practices in other schools, the results of research about what does and doesn't work, help with planning and successfully managing meetings, and identifying and obtaining funds from a variety of public and private sources. Some help can come from district staff. Many successful partnerships also include local colleges and universities in such capacities as evaluators or trainers.

Districts can also help schools by providing small amounts of discretionary money to use free from often complex and time consuming bureaucratic requirements.

School officials will have more success in encouraging schools to adopt partnership practices when they recognize the differences in leadership, culture, readiness, and capacity for change among schools in the same district. Some schools are front-runners and have already moved to adopt many of the recommendations in this report. They need encouragement, rewards, and recognition. Other schools are laggard and may be quite resistant. They require stronger incentives and intervention. In between will be many on the fence, where different mixes of "carrots and sticks" may be useful. Just as all districts should not be treated the same, neither should all schools within a district.

A Comprehensive Policy And Back-Up Support In San Diego

San Diego was one of the first big-city school districts to adopt a written parent involvement policy and to back it up with central office staff and local money. The San Diego policy states the School Board's commitment to (a) involving parents as partners in school governance, including shared decision making; (b) establishing effective two-way home-school communication; (c) developing structures and strategies in each school to empower parents to participate actively in their children's education; (d) providing district coordination and support, K-12; and (e) using schools to connect students and families to community resources. Support activities include a home-school partnership conference, a mobile parent resource center, and home learning calendars. In addition, the San Diego district has provided grants on a competitive basis to schools to develop new parent and community outreach strategies.

Contact: Jeana Preston, Parent Involvement Program, San Diego City Schools, Room 2121, 4100 Normal St., San Diego, CA 92103; telephone: 619-293-8560; fax: 619-293-8567.

Reciprocity In Action In Tacoma, Washington

The Tacoma School District has written policy statements which mandate involvement of "parents, families, advocates for children, and the community" to be fostered by every school. Through its personnel policies, expectations for family participation and accountability, special outreach efforts, and a complaint procedure, the district seeks to build a partnership between home, school, and community that will encourage high student achievement. For example, schools are asked to require school staff to be available to families for thirty minutes before and after school and to include strategies for family/community involvement in the school's required yearly "building plan," while families are expected to devote a minimum of twenty hours a year of volunteer service to the school and to monitor and sign-off on homework. The district provides central office staff to support the policy.

Contact: Gay Campbell, Director, Community Relations, Tacoma Public Schools; telephone: 206-596-1015; fax: 206-596-2550.

Recommendation Two

Align personnel policies with the district's commitment to collaboration.

Policies and practices for selecting, evaluating, rewarding, and promoting school staff at both the district and school level should reflect a commitment to building partnerships with families and community agencies and institutions.

Involving family and community members in personnel actions such as interviewing teacher candidates and selecting a principal will help to assure that family and community perspectives and voices are considered. Respecting family needs and demands on teachers' time, regulations, or contract language should specify time for teachers and other staff to be available for meetings and conferences with family members.

A promising but seldom-tried way to support collaborative policies and at the same time influence schools of education is to establish a district policy to give hiring preference to teachers and administrators who give evidence that they have been prepared through course work and/or experience to collaborate effectively with families and the community.

Districts should reward and recognize those who promote and exemplify collaboration through released time, professional development credits, mini-grants, and public praise and awards.

Hiring And Evaluating With Collaboration In Mind

Addie Johnson, principal of the Robert W. Coleman Elementary School in Baltimore, is an innovative and energetic proponent of collaboration with families and community. Using an 18-month curriculum in her Parent Academy, she trains family members to support the work of the school and to reinforce classroom learning. She has installed a washer and dryer in the school to encourage family members to come into the building. When Ms. Johnson is assessing faculty and staff candidates, she won't support one unless he/she supports partnerships with parents. Further, evaluation of teachers and staff is done not only in traditional areas, but includes collaborative skills as well.

Contact: Addie Johnson, Principal, Robert W. Coleman Elementary School, 2400 Windsor Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216; telephone: 410-396-0764; fax: 410-225-3035.

School In Cambridge Supports Teachers Who Collaborate

Participatory decision making has been in place since 1975 at the Graham and Parks Alternative Public School (K-8) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Steering Committee consists of five elected parents, five elected staff members, the paid parent coordinator, the principal, and two community members. Through a committee structure, this governing body engages in program and school evaluation and makes decisions on hiring, discipline, curriculum, funding, and building and grounds matters. The hiring committee gives significant weight to experience that a teaching candidate has had in collaboration with families and/or community.

Additionally, the school will hire substitutes and allow teachers to use their professional development days to plan or work in collaborative projects with families or community partners. Teachers are grouped on teams which meet from one to three times per week.

Contact: Leonard Solo, Principal, Graham & Parks Alternative Public School, 15 Upton St., Cambridge, MA 02139; telephone: 617-349-6612; fax: 617-349-6615.

Recommendation Three

Prepare school staff and parents to work collaboratively.

Administrators, teachers, families, and community members need to learn how to work together well. For most, this is unexplored territory. The skills required include talking and listening across cultural and educational boundaries, negotiating, strategic planning, interviewing, planning and chairing meetings, having productive parent-teacher conferences, and building consensus about the ends-and-means of education.

Each group approaches collaboration with some resistance: teachers may fear loss of status and criticism from parents; family members may remember negative experiences with schooling or be intimidated by status and specialized language of educators; and community agencies may view schools as aloof and having little connection to or understanding of their broader communities. All participants have time pressures. Specific training for collaboration can help to overcome these obstacles. For educators and social service providers, preparation for partnership should start with their pre-service training and continue on through their careers. In the case of teachers, we know that few universities prepare them well on this topic. The burden for training must fall to the building or district level. School district officials should be encouraged to express their concern about this gap in teacher preparation to schools of education and certification and accreditation agencies.

Training For Collaboration

In 1987, when Clearview Elementary School, Herndon, Virginia, decided to take Fairfax County up on its offer to explore shared decision making, no one knew quite what the outcomes would be. In the eight years since, the school culture has been fundamentally altered. In the initial stage, the county offered monthly training and support sessions to staff and administrators to help them over the difficulties of the new approach. After two and a half years, parents were invited into the process. They also benefited from training for collaboration. In order to fully participate in decision making, family members are also offered workshops so they can be brought up to date on current educational issues and jargon. Today, the decision making body includes nearly equal numbers of educators and family members. Diverse parent representation is assured through election from geographic districts. Every spring, the school holds its "Spring Ponder" in which all members of the Clearview community join to review what has worked well and what hasn't and to make plans for the coming year.

Contact: Sheila Bertrand, Principal, Clearview School, 12635 Builders Rd., Herndon, VA 22070; telephone: 703-318-8934, fax: 703-318-8939. Karen Willoughby, Fairfax County Schools, Department of Instructional Services, 3705 Crest Dr., Annandale, VA 22003; telephone: 703-846-8600; fax: 703-207-0257.

On-Site Support For Schools

Hawaii's State Department of Education funds the Parents Communication Network Centers, which are staffed by part-time parent facilitators at school sites. The parent facilitators, together with the school administration and faculty, develop a program of activities that meets the needs of the parents and students in that community. These activities may include educational seminars, training workshops, volunteer services, and school activities developed specifically for families, students, community members, teachers, and other school personnel. These parent facilitators are trained extensively in community building and are provided on-going support by a district facilitator and state team.

Contact: Cynthia Okazaki, 45-259 Waikula Rd., Room H-34, Kaneohe, HI 96744; telephone: 808-235-7747; fax: 808-233-5689.

Video Resource:
A Tale Of Two Partnerships

The Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning has prepared a 25-minute video which tells the stories of two schools--a high school and an elementary school--that have been developing partnerships with families and community agencies over the last five years. The stories, told by parents, teachers, and administrators, illustrate some key Center research findings about partnerships.

Contact: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning at Boston University, 605 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215; telephone: 617-353-3309; fax: 617-353-8444.

Recommendation Four

Involve family members as full partners with real decision-making responsibility.

When schools and districts begin to see families as partners and not simply as clients, they will find ways to involve them in governance and decision-making processes, including decision making about budgets, school programs, and personnel. Resistance will be encountered from some teachers or administrators. Nonetheless, officials in many districts are realizing the benefits of involving both families and teachers in more than token ways.

Shared governance requires a careful re-design of the decision-making structures traditionally used in schools and districts. Officials must make sure that new policies mean genuine responsibility for families, teachers, administrators, and students, as well as representatives of community agencies and institutions. The result can be a much stronger sense of "ownership" by all concerned about the schools and therefore stronger support for them. Transferring many decisions from the central office to individual schools has been seen to open the way for greater family and community involvement.

Strong parent associations or parent-teacher associations can help provide family members a voice in adopting school policies, if they address school issues and participate in planning and restructuring efforts. In some schools, these associations are serving as both school supporters and advocates for child and family interests.

District and school policies should be designed to encourage and strengthen these groups where they exist and to encourage family members to organize them where they are missing. Policies and practice should encourage parent associations to reach out aggressively to families that have not been involved before in their activities to assure that they are representative of the school's diverse constituencies.

Building-Level Decision Making In Denver

All one hundred and ten of Denver's public schools have collaborative decision-making teams with building-level authority to make hiring, firing, and budget decisions. Family Resource Schools, a subset of the Denver system, represent a further commitment to parent partnerships by offering family training, education, and empowerment programs and providing a single point of entry for comprehensive services for families.

Contact: Bruce Atchison, Director, Family Resource Schools, Denver Public Schools, 900 Grant St., Denver, CO 80203; telephone: 303-764-3587; fax: 303-839-8001.

District-Wide Partnership

Jefferson County Public Schools in Colorado has been an active partner in the County's Master Planning Initiative since its founding in 1993. The initiative brings together policy makers, elected leaders, social service providers, and citizens to set goals and direct resources to set and implement a prevention agenda for Jefferson County's children and families. Each year, the General Assembly, which consists of any county resident who wants to participate, assesses needs and sets a goal for the effort at its fall meeting. Superintendent Dr. Wayne Carle, along with eight other county leaders representing social services, municipalities, and criminal justice, form the steering committee that commits and coordinates resources to reach the established goal. A Coordinating Committee then implements the steering committee's decisions, facilitating coordination and collaboration among the county's 70 public and private agencies. In addition to the Master Planning Initiative, every one of the 135 schools in the Jefferson County School District, as well as the central office itself, has a process that incorporates stakeholders in all major decisions that are made.

Contact: Cherie Lyons, Chair, Coordinating Committee, Master Planning Initiative, Jefferson County Public Schools, 1829 Denver West Dr., Bldg. 27, Suite 413, Golden, CO 80401; telephone: 303-982-6840; fax: 303-982-6838.

Families And Teachers Share Power In Richmond

At the Fairfield Court Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia, the School-wide Planning Council, composed of teachers, family members, and community representatives, meets regularly to decide on the school's annual plan, to monitor and evaluate progress on the plan, and to allocate the funds that are allotted to each school by the district. The school has a successful family support program, using parents trained as home visitors and trainers.

Contact: Carolyn Spurlock, Principal, Fairfield Court Elementary School, 2510 Phaup St., Richmond, VA 23223; telephone: 804-780-4639; fax: 804-780-4087.

Recommendation Five

Develop agreements with social service and health agencies to provide services for students and their families.

Because schools have enormous influence on and unique access to children, they are being called upon to take on more and broader responsibilities beyond their academic role. However, schools should not assume these responsibilities alone, but through partnerships with communities and families.

Schools benefit when comprehensive health and social services are offered to children and their families, since their educational mission cannot be fulfilled when children are sick, hungry, or emotionally disturbed, or when serious unmet health and social service needs interfere with families' ability to nurture and guide their children adequately.

The evidence is that good programs of school-linked services can help to increase student achievement, save money and reduce overlapping services, reach those children and families most in need, increase community support for the school, and help at-risk families develop the capacity to manage their own lives successfully.

School officials should take the lead to negotiate agreements with health and human service agencies for providing coordinated services located on or off school sites. A good local plan for school-linked services will reflect the needs of the families to be served and involve them in setting the agenda, deciding on priorities, and designing service programs.

Most services in low-income communities will include family support and parent education components. Home visiting is a mechanism often employed. Home visitors can assist families to gain access to needed social and health services, to become involved in school activities, and to support their own children's education at home.

School Based Youth Services In New Jersey

One example of the School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), which is a statewide effort that places comprehensive services in or near secondary schools, is located in New Brunswick High School. The program provides mental and physical health services, teen parenting support, job placement services, and recreation in a comfortable, accessible environment. It is reported that the School Based program, which is open to all, has avoided having a negative stigma attached to it by creating an atmosphere where adolescents feel comfortable. This partnership between the University of Medicine and Dentistry (UMDNJ), New Brunswick Tomorrow (a community development corporation), and the New Brunswick Public Schools works collaboratively with local health clinics, hospitals, and businesses in order to provide these comprehensive health and social services.

Contact: Roberta Knowlton, CN 700, Trenton, NJ 08625; telephone: 609-292-7816; fax: 609-984-7380.

"Rain" Mothers Connect Families To Services

The RAIN (Referral and Information Network) program at the Feinberg-Fisher Elementary School in Miami Beach has organized families to remove barriers to access and obtain services by conducting home visits, making phone calls, and translating for new families who are uncomfortable asking questions or do not know where to get help for themselves and their children. The RAIN mothers help families, many of whom are from the Caribbean, find and gain access to social and health services available in the community. The RAIN program grew out of the Healthy Learners partnership between Florida International University, the Florida Department of Human Resources, Dade County Public Schools, and Legal Services with the purpose of creating a "full service" school.

Contact: Dr. Grace Nebb, Principal, or Teresa Martiato, 1420 Washington Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33139; telephone: 305-674-7805; fax: 305-674-8557 or 305-534-3925.

Inter-Agency Collaboration In An Ohio Center

The Barberton (Ohio) Public School District has joined forces with Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron, The University of Akron, Summit County Department of Human Services and the Akron-Summit County Department of Human Services, and the Akron-Summit Community Action Agency to provide comprehensive medical, educational, social, and mental health services to low-income families and children from birth to five years of age. Decker Family Development Center, which began operations in August of 1990, now has a total of 17 community agencies that bring their respective services to the "one stop shop" Center. The Center successfully applies the principles of comprehensiveness and of true collaboration.

Contact: Mary Frances Ahern, Decker Family Development Center, 633 Brady Rd., Barberton, OH 44203; telephone: 216-848-4264; fax: 216-848-4226.

Recommendation Six

Use multiple approaches to school-family communication.

The better families are informed about the schools and their own children's social and academic progress, the better they will be to able participate effectively. Access to information enables family members to support their children's learning and help the school to improve education for all children. The starting point for most schools should be assessing and improving traditional communication approaches: report cards, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, open houses, inserts in local newspapers, and parent association meetings. There are scores of other innovative ways to communicate that can work under different circumstances and for specified purposes: for example, a telephone with voice mail capacity in or near every classroom, automated telephone systems, three-way parent-teacher-student conferences, homework hotlines, home visitors, meetings and conferences that are away from the school in community settings, use of local access cable television, use of ethnic and other language radio stations and newspapers, home-teacher journals, and notices and hand-outs in markets, clinics, churches, mosques, and temples. In many districts, special attention must be given to communicating with people whose first language is not English, those without telephones, or those who are homeless.

ELEMENTS OF A DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP POLICY

The recommendations in this report suggest most of the elements that district leaders might consider as they move to draft and adopt written partnership policies. These elements include:

- *Statement of the District (or the school's) commitment to the partnership concept and reasons for supporting it. Commitment to providing on-site support and help from central office.*
- *Personnel policies to support partnership: staff selection, staff development, evaluation, promotion, expectation for the preparation of new teachers, contract time available for meeting with families, participation of family and community representatives in personnel decisions, rewards, and incentives.*
- *Requirement that every school develop a partnership plan, specifying some of the mechanisms that schools should consider: family/parent centers, home visiting, action research teams, mentoring programs.*
- *Authorization and encouragement of varied approaches to home-school communication, including conferences, newsletters, telephones in classrooms, automated telephone systems, use of community media and facilities, and messages in languages other than English.*
- *Encouragement of agreements with health and social service providers for school-linked service programs.*
- *Requirements and/or guidelines for district and school level planning, decision making, and school governance mechanisms, including parent associations and school site councils.*
- *Authorization and encouragement for teachers to provide guidance and learning materials to aid families in supporting the learning of their own children at home and in the community.*
- *Encouragement and ground rules for agreements with community agencies and institutions for community learning opportunities for children and families, including community service by students.*
- *Encouragement of school-business partnerships, and guidelines for their development and implementation.*
- *Policies for adult and community education, and for use of school facilities for out-of-school-time programs.*
- *Policies to encourage parent choice: within schools, between schools, inter-district, charter or alternative schools. Provision for family/consumer information services.*

Telephone System Calls Out To Families

The new telephone system at Washington Community Magnet School in Lynn, Massachusetts, not only takes calls for teachers by means of voice mail, but makes calls to families to notify them of changes in schedule, special events at the school, and other important news. The system was put to the test in September to notify parents that the first day of school would begin at an earlier time than in previous years. The message got through, and students arrived at the new time. Calls can also be made to the school to check on homework assigned.

Contact: Jeff Barile, Principal, Washington Community Magnet School, 58 Blossom St., Lynn, MA 01902; telephone: 617-477-7470.

High Tech Communication In Rural Wisconsin

The Flambeau Schools in rural northwestern Wisconsin are developing a unique approach to family-school communication and innovative student assessment. Student portfolios which report student achievements during the year will be put online for homes and families who will be encouraged to provide, via computer, information about student accomplishments and learning away from school.

Contact: Chuck Ericksen, Community Education Director, Flambeau School District, PO Box 86, Tony, WI 54563; telephone: 715-532-7760; fax: 715-532-5405.

Building Support For Reform In Kentucky

The Jefferson County Community Committee for School Reform is one of several chapters of the statewide Pritchard Committee that is aggressively seeking to provide the public with good and accurate information about Kentucky's extensive school reform program. The efforts are aimed at countering opposition to reform because of lack of information or inaccurate information about what the schools are trying to do. The Community Committee uses a speakers bureau to reach scores of meetings and organizations.

The committee also works with the school district to provide on-site assistance to several individual schools seeking to strengthen family participation in school-based decision making, to improve communication between the school and families, to recruit volunteers to help the school, and to build support for the school's own reform plans.

Contact: Johnetta Marshall, 9614 Walnutwood Way, Jefferson Town, KY 40299; telephone: 502-267-8034; fax: 502-266-8889.

Recommendation Seven

Increase opportunities for students to learn at home and in the community.

Learning does not stop at the schoolhouse door. Nearly all families want to increase their children's academic success, and many say that they need and welcome guidance from teachers on setting realistic expectations, monitoring and helping with homework, selecting appropriate books and learning materials, supporting the teacher's academic priorities, and using home learning materials. Teachers (or groups of teachers in a school or district) can develop their own learn-at-home materials for parents to use or they can use materials that have already been developed. Most parents respect the expertise of teachers and will respond to guidance from them about how to help their children learn out of school.

Schools can also encourage the community to set up homework and tutoring centers for children and teens and out-of-school-time programs with both recreational and academic options. Senior citizens and other community residents can be recruited to help students outside school hours either in the school or in other settings.

Schools and school districts can also take the initiative to promote increased access to community resources by proposing reduced fees at museums and cultural events, initiating family reading programs in libraries, increasing access to college and university facilities and courses, and proposing tutoring and mentoring programs to businesses and corporations.

Parents Help Students Learn At Home

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework in language arts, science/health, and math is a process that keeps families informed about and involved in their children's learning and progress in school. The TIPS materials are disseminated nationally to assist teachers to design interactive homework that matches their curricular objectives. TIPS manuals for teachers and packets of prototype homework activities are available in math (kindergarten to grade 5) and science (grade 3) in the elementary grades, and science, language arts, and basic math in the middle grades (6-8).

Homework is the student's responsibility. TIPS interactive activities require students to show, share, demonstrate, interview, gather reactions, and interact in other ways with their family members. Parents play supportive roles in discussing homework with their children. All TIPS activities include a section for home-to-school communication that enables parents to relay comments on whether they enjoyed the activities and whether they learned something about what the student is learning in class.

Contact: Joyce Epstein, Karen Salinas, or Vivian Jackson, or Publications, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University, 3505 North Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218; telephone: 410-516-8800; fax: 410-516-8890.

A Museum-Magnet School Partnership

The Reginald F. Chavez Magnet Elementary School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has been collaborating with The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science for five years. The partnership has developed a number of programs that allow exchanges of resources and ideas, increase student participation in Museum programs, and open the museum to neighborhood residents and magnet school staff. One of the newest programs is Proyecto Futuro, a school-museum venture which provides evening sessions that feature hands-on family science learning activities and mini-kits which can be used at home.

Contact: Maddie Zeigler, Educational Development Specialist, The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, 1801 Mountain Rd., NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104; telephone: 505-841-2857; fax: 505-841-2866.

Going To School At The Zoo

The Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet in Buffalo, NY, utilizes the resources of the local zoo and science museum for its students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Students in the seventh and eighth grades have their classes at the zoo and learn, for example, skills in research and tour design. They give lecture demonstrations on animals to younger student groups.

Contact: Delcene A. West, Principal, Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet, One Martin Luther King Parkway, Buffalo, NY 14211; telephone: 716-897-8050; fax: 716-897-8049. Information is also available on the World Wide Web: http://drew.buffalo.k12.ny.us/.

Recommendation Eight

Set up parent/family centers in every elementary, middle, and high school.

Family centers are a low-cost, easy-to-manage way to make schools more hospitable to families, to plan and carry out a wide variety of family and community partnership activities, and to encourage parent-to-parent and teacher-family communication. The centers serve as a linkage agent for schools, families, and communities.

A family center in the school is a symbol of the school's welcome to families and also a useful mechanism for planning and carrying out diverse partnership activities. They are being used across the country for many purposes: operating food banks; providing libraries with books, toys, and computer hardware and software; setting up clothing exchanges; providing ESL or GED classes for family members; and as an informal place for parents to meet with other parents and teachers.

These centers come in various forms. Some are as simple as a few tables in the library. Others may be more extensive and include comfortable chairs and sofas, a telephone, a refrigerator and a coffee pot, and tables for meetings and work. They have been set up in unused classrooms, a section of the auditorium, or even an old school bus with the seats removed.

Most centers have at least part-time staffing, usually a family member or community resident trained and paid for through Title I, district funds, or a grant from a foundation or a business partner.

"Parent Presence" In San Diego

The Parent Center at the Memorial Academy, a predominantly Latino junior high school in San Diego, is operated collaboratively with the school's parent association. This center helps maintain a high level of family involvement in the school with a varied mix of activities. Family members gather in the center to plan programs of family support as well as activities to support students, teachers, and the instructional program. Center on Families researcher Vivian Johnson describes an effective and unusual program there, "Parent Presence," in which parents respond to occasional teacher requests to "sit in" on classes experiencing disruptive student behavior. The presence of a parent gives the students the message that parents support the teachers. Most students get the message and respond positively.

Contact: Antonio Alfaro, Principal; Linda Taggmet, Chapter I Coordinator; or Mercedes Pacheco, Parent Room Coordinator, 2850 Logan Ave., San Diego, CA 92113; telephone: 619-525-7400; fax: 619-238-2371.

Making Parents Feel Welcome In The Lone Star State

The Parent Center at Hollibrook Accelerated Elementary in Houston, Texas, is a "parents' space with a comfortable feel." The room is equipped with sofas, chairs, and tables; there's a coffee pot, refrigerator, and microwave. The playpens, toys, and books are for the younger Hollibrook students-to-be whose parents are volunteering elsewhere in the building. ESL classes for parents are held here during the day, and parents can also practice here for the computer literacy courses they take tuition-free at the local middle school. During the schoolwide reading period, the first half-hour of school, students benefit from being able to come to the center to read to their parents or other adults. Parents make graduation gowns for kindergartners using the sewing machines in the center.

Contact: Roy Ford, Principal, Hollibrook Accelerated Elementary School, 3602 Hollister, Houston, TX 77080; telephone: 713-329-6430; fax: 713-329-6440.

Recommendation Nine

Expand parent choice within the public school system and provide good consumer information.

Choice within the public school system is one important way to give families more opportunities to make decisions about their children's education and to assume responsibility for it, without using public funds for private or religious schools.

Many states and districts offer opportunities for families to choose among programs within schools and among public schools. In some cases, the new laws and policies authorize within-district and inter-district transfers as well as charter and magnet schools. These opportunities allow families and teachers to develop or to choose distinctive schools to meet diverse family, student, and teacher interests.

We recommend policies which will provide alternative approaches that increase choices within the public school system, including choices among teachers and programs within a single school, choices among existing schools, and charter, alternative, and magnet schools. These policies offer opportunities for teachers and parents interested in alternative approaches to learning. One approach to choice that has met success in some districts is to break large schools into several small "houses" or separate small schools. These smaller schools facilitate closer connections between and among teachers, families, and the surrounding community.

Center on Families researcher Charles Glenn points to the Massachusetts design as one which can overcome the inequality of access to information and readiness to make decisions that less affluent parents usually experience. Key elements of the system in some Massachusetts cities are: (1) universal choice with no attendance zones; 2) all pupils assigned through the choice process; and (3) an effective and aggressive parent information system. Over time, less affluent parents learn to be better consumers of information and choosers of schools.

A good consumer information plan will recognize that parents want to know about the school's track record in academic achievement, in providing a safe and orderly environment and a positive school climate, and in preparing students for the next level of education. They also often want to know about policies and resources which encourage family involvement, make available health and social services, and provide "out-of-school-time" programs for children.

Creating A New Culture In A Small High School Of Choice

An interesting example of creating smaller schools from large high schools to increase parent choice can be found in suburban Lacey, Washington. The New Century High School believes that "the single most important reason for our success is the sense of community we have created. Students whose families are involved in their education do better." The school seeks to involve families and the community in many different ways: volunteers in classrooms, the computer lab, and the library; a parent advisory committee; coffee hours for families; several business partnerships; a parent newsletter; and encouraging families to monitor student homework. School funds are used to hire a community coordinator.

Contact: Principal Gail Covington McBride, New Century High School, 8929 Martin Way, Lacey, WA 98501; telephone: 360-493-9621; fax: 360-493-9615.

Supporting Informed Choices

Parents need accurate and appropriate information so they can make the best choices for their children. Such information can come from the schools, but it can also come from other organizations who care about children. The East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC), in collaboration with the Public Education Association, publish an annual report on each middle school within School District 34 of the New York City Public Schools.

The report includes test scores, but goes beyond to information that helps families gauge the culture of the school, discussing such things as the school's physical environment, including restrooms and lunchroom, educational philosophy, teacher training, student behavior, and the accessibility of teachers and administrators. EBC also meets with parents monthly to teach them the skills needed to advocate for their children.

Contact: Sr. Kathy Maire, EBC, 287 Lott Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11212; telephone: 718-498-4095; fax: 718-485-5537.

Recommendation Ten

Create planning and problem-solving teams.

District officials and principals should encourage schools to form and use action or action research teams as a way to improve working relationships between participants in a partnership and a means to gather information about school and community problems and then to help to solve these problems.

This approach has been tested by schools both in the United States and in several other countries through studies and projects sponsored by the Center on Families. In action research, the school forms a small team of volunteer teachers, family members, community representatives, and students, along with the principal, to assess school and community strengths and priorities or to investigate a troubling problem or issue.

The team talks to teachers, families, and community agencies and residents through various means including focus groups, interviews, and surveys. They analyze the results and decide on one or two priority objectives which can be addressed through family or community collaboration. The team works with others in the school or community to plan and carry out one or more interventions or projects aimed at the objective. The team then studies and evaluates what happens. Some examples of interventions in Center on Families projects were home visits, parent-teacher conferences, family centers, and mentoring programs.

One of the main results in some projects was that families and teachers learned to work together to solve problems that were meaningful to the children and families in that school and to communicate with and trust each other. It is also a process that invites participation of families in making decisions about their own children as well as the school as a whole.

To make this process work, it is usually helpful to have a skilled outside facilitator as well as an on-site coordinator. The facilitator can be a university professor or graduate student, or a staff member from a community organization or agency. The facilitator is responsible for coordinating and facilitating meetings, following up with staff and families, and bringing in outside resources. The process takes time, but our research shows that the results can be cost effective.

A Parent-Teacher Team In The Appalachian Foothills

The action research project in the Atenville, West Virginia, Elementary School set out to study and improve communication between families and the school. The school reached out to the least connected families through a variety of means: a church-based parent center, a parent-to-parent phone chain, and home visits. The action team documented project results by compiling portfolios on children's progress and their family's involvement. Positive changes were noted in an increase in family and student expectations for student success and increased enrollments in summer support services.

Contact: Darlene Dalton, Principal, Atenville Elementary School, Rt. 2, Box 28, Harts, WV 25524; telephone: 304-855-3173.

Action Teams For School, Family, And Community Partnerships

Over 70 elementary, middle, and high schools have tested and helped to improve the design and work of Action Teams for School, Family, and Community Partnerships, developed by researcher Joyce Epstein and her colleagues. In each school, an Action Team for Partnerships guides the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of partnership, including activities for six major types of involvement--parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The Action Team of at least six people (teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, students in the upper grades, and others) assesses present practices of partnership, creates a three-year outline, and writes a one-year detailed plan to strengthen partnerships with all families. To organize the work, each Action Team member serves as chair or co-chair of one of six subcommittees for each type of involvement. With the assistance of other teachers, parents, students, and community members, the Action Team selects and implements new or improved practices of partnership that meet the schools' needs, interests, and goals. Plans and progress are shared with the school council, parents, teachers, and students. The Action Team continues its work and each year develops a one-year plan to improve and maintain its program of partnership. Elementary, middle, and high schools ready to take this approach may join a national network to receive guidelines and information about how to develop their own comprehensive program of school, family, and community partnerships.

Contacts: Facilitators helping Baltimore elementary and middle schools with the Action Team approach are Marsha Powell-Johnson and Paula Williams, at the Fund for Educational Excellence, 800 North Charles, Baltimore, MD 21201; telephone: 410-685-8300.

For other information about Action Teams in elementary, middle, and high schools, contact Partnership-2000 Communications Director, Karen Salinas, Johns Hopkins University, Center on

Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning/CRESPAR, 3505 North Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218; telephone: 410-516-8818; fax: 410-516-8890.

Getting Started

Leadership by school board members, superintendents, central office staff, and principals is the key to the kind of cultural change that can occur if all or most of these recommendations are followed.

Officials who want to promote collaboration should use their "bully pulpits" to provide moral, civic, and educational leadership. Partnership ideas need to be a part of the vision which school leaders project as they seek to make clear to school staff and the public the schools' proposed goals and standards.

We know that school leaders must be the ones who "reach out" to begin the process of collaboration. But, if they don't, family members and community representatives can and should take the initiative and urge the school officials along.

We have provided many short examples of successful practices in schools in many parts of the country to illustrate how these recommendations can really work. In the Policy Portfolio of which this report is a part, there are longer descriptions of exemplary partnership programs.

Explanation of Key Terms

Families: The individual(s) responsible for a child's care and upbringing. May include biological or non-biological parents, grandparents and other relatives, older siblings, and foster parents. We prefer this term to "parents" because it is more inclusive.

Partnerships: Formal or informal procedures or programs to promote closer connections between school and the families and communities they serve. We use partnerships instead of the traditional term, "parent involvement," to signal the inclusion of community agencies, organizations, and individuals in a three-way relationship with families and to indicate relationships where all parties have reciprocal rights and responsibilities.

Collaboration: In this paper, we use the terms partnership and collaboration interchangeably.

Recommendations To Advance School-Family-Community Collaboration

1. *Adopt and back up written policies for partnership.*
2. *Align personnel policies with District's commitment to partnership.*
3. *Prepare school staff and families to collaborate.*
4. *Involve family members as full partners with real decision-making responsibility.*
5. *Develop agreements with social service and health agencies to provide services to students and their families.*
6. *Use multiple approaches to communication.*
7. *Increase opportunities for students to learn at home and in the community.*
8. *Set up family/parent centers in every elementary, middle, and high school.*
9. *Expand parent choice within the public school system.*
10. *Create planning and problem-solving teams.*

Center On Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning

Co-Directors-Don Davies, Boston University and
Joyce L. Epstein, Johns Hopkins University

Individuals from the following organizations participated in focus groups and interviews on policy issues related to school-family-community partnerships during the development of this policy document.

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Focus Group at Educational Commission of the States Annual Conference
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Local school volunteer coordinators

Jackson, Mississippi
Elementary and secondary school principals, Jackson Public Schools

San Diego, California
Principals, central office officials and district director of parent involvement

State of Massachusetts Ipswich High School parents
Newburyport Elementary School parents
Blackstone Elementary School parents (Boston)
Boston elementary school principals
Selected directors of school-linked services projects in local school districts

State of Washington
State House and Senate chairs of Education Committees
Staff members, State Department of Education
State symposium on Family-School Collaboration, including 65 principals, superintendents, parents, legislators, and state agency staff

Additional Resource
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Continue to the next article.

Parent News for February 1997

Community Spotlight

Providing Services for Teen Parents: An Innovative Approach in Portland, Oregon

by Mary Karter

We frequently receive requests at the National Parent Information Network for resources and information on programs for teen parents. Preliminary data indicate that nationwide there is a slight decline in the teen birth rate (Facts at a Glance, 1996). While this trend is encouraging, the critical consequences of teen childbearing continue to put this issue at the forefront for educators and health care providers in their program development. There appears to be a direct relationship between early childbearing and one or several of the following: poor school performance, poor health and reduced access to health care, less supportive home environments, and higher rates of poverty and incarceration. Without appropriate intervention for individual teen parents and their families, it is likely that these consequences are, or will become, multigenerational (Facts at a Glance, 1996).

Changing these patterns will take a strong, comprehensive effort of the resources within the community, including health care, social services, and education. According to a report by the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, programs "must intervene early in the lives of teen parents and their children to strengthen the resilience and responsibility of these young families, rather than waiting until problems arise or they begin to rely on public assistance" (School-Based Programs for Adolescent Parents and Their Young Children, 1994, p.iii).

This month's Community Spotlight provides a model of one teen parent program located in Portland, Oregon. In addition, the Spotlight article provides more information on resources and organizations that may be able to assist in program development for teen parents. Our guest author for the Community Spotlight, Mary Karter, is available to respond to questions or provide ideas for program development within your community. The work of many professionals who are serving this population is greatly appreciated, and we hope that the resources provided in this month's Community Spotlight will be useful for addressing the critical needs of teen parents in your community.

Providing Services for Teen Parents; An Innovative Approach in Portland, Oregon by Mary Karter

Teen Parent Services in Portland, Oregon, provides educational and support services to pregnant and parenting students in a variety of school settings, including a special teen parent class offered at regular high schools. A strong emphasis is placed on learning life skills that all teens and parents must have, such as conflict resolution, coping skills, and managing personal finances. Weekly support groups and parenting skills groups enrich the classroom experience for students. Liaisons work closely with other staff in the school and with community agencies to advocate for the support students need to be successful as students and as parents.

There are two alternative settings within Teen Parent Services. The first program is called PIVOT (Partners in Vocational Opportunities Training), a partnership between the Job Corps and Portland Public Schools. The model has been developed for an older, welfare-receiving nonpregnant teen parent (between the ages of 17 and 21) who has dropped out of school and wishes to re-enter, complete her/his GED or diploma, and receive job training.

The second alternative, called the Monroe Program, is a transitional educational setting for pregnant students who will be returning to their home school after the birth of the baby. It also includes young mothers who wish to earn their GED.

Students receive parenting education in addition to their regular classes. A full-time social worker and case manager are available for students' social service needs. Also available for students in Teen Parent Services is the Teen Summer Program. This six-week program helps students earn credits, increase basic skills, and receive work experience.

In November of 1995, Portland Public Schools Teen Parent Services (PPS/TPS) was selected by the Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD) as one of two strong school-based teen parent programs in the country. CAPD is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve the self-sufficiency of disadvantaged children, adolescents, and families. Also provided, through CAPD, is strategic planning, program design, and evaluation assistance.

The PPS school district was requested to participate in CAPD's School-Based Initiative for Adolescent Parents and Their Children. The funding for this program was provided by the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Foundation for Child Development. This initiative has given PPS an opportunity to work closely with our community partners to improve and expand services to pregnant and parenting teens. The program assessment and planning done through the funding from CAPD have helped us identify a variety of areas that need attention. Our first area for attention is providing equitable services for all students.

Toward this goal, PPS operated three child care centers during the 1995-96 school year. A total of 86 students used onsite child care this year. Funding sources for onsite child care were Adult and Family Services; Multnomah County Office for Children, Youth and Families; and a Child Care Development Block Grant. Keeping slots full and bringing in enough revenue to keep centers open continue to be major challenges for Teen Parent Services. Funding for the 1995-96 school year required elimination of 10 slots of onsite child care (from 52 to 42). The grant amounts still do not cover the actual cost of providing this service. Quarterly meetings will continue to be held between Teen Parent Services staff and funding partners.

Another initiative that provides health care to the teen parent population as well as to other parents is the Screening Kids/Informing Parents (SKIP) program. This program provides screening and assessment of infants and toddlers to find out who needs a referral for additional screening or for early intervention. Of the 140 infants/toddlers screened by SKIP, 44 were found to have some kind of problem. Additional screening was suggested for 37 percent of those children screened, and appropriate early intervention programs could be introduced for individual children. The program was initially funded by the PPS school district but was recently reduced due to budget cuts. However, with the effort of volunteers, the SKIP program has continued.

For more information on Teen Parent Services, contact Mary Karter, Portland Public Schools, Monroe Building, 2508 NE Everett, Portland, OR 97232. Telephone: 503-916-5858, x 410.

Sources:

Facts at a glance. (1996, October). Washington, DC: Child Trends, Inc.

The school-based initiative for adolescent parents and their young children: Overview. (1995, October). Bala Cynwyd, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD).

School-based programs for adolescent parents and their young children. (1994, October). Bala Cynwyd, PA: Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD).

For more information about program development:

Organizations and Other Resources

Center for Assessment and Policy Development
111 Presidential Blvd., Suite 234

Bala Cynwyd, PA 10004
Telephone: 610-664-4540

The Center also publishes *School-Based Programs for Adolescent Parents and Their Young Children*.

Vida Health Communications
6 Bigelow St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: 617-864-7862
Email: VidaHealth@aol.com

Vida Health Communications video resources include: PROJECT FUTURE, a comprehensive, three-program video series addressing the needs of adolescent parents.

The National Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy
2100 M St., NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20037
Telephone: 202-857-8655

This campaign is developing resources, media and public relations programs to increase the public's understanding of teen pregnancy. Its primary goal is to prevent teen pregnancy and specifically to reduce the teenage pregnancy rate by one-third by the year 2005.

The National Center for Fathering
10200 W. 75th St., Suite 267
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
Telephone: 913-384-4661
URL: http://www.fathers.com/

This center provides a variety of resources and publications for fathers. It is currently working on a collaborative project with the Community Foundation of Central Florida designed to gather baseline information on the attitudes, behaviors, and support needs for teen fathers in the Orlando, Florida, area.

Concerned Black Men, Inc.
Washington, DC Chapter
16511 K St., NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202-783-5414

Concerned Black Men is a national nonprofit organization with affiliate chapters in at least eight cities. Male volunteers provide positive role models to young men and build improved channels of communication between adults and children through programs and activities promoting educational, cultural, and social development.

DADS Teen Father Program
County of San Diego, Dept. of Social Services
7065 Broadway, Suite 200
Lemon Grove, CA 91945
Telephone: 619-668-3940

The DADS Teen Father program is a collaboration of three organizations providing comprehensive services to teen fathers. The program works with young fathers, ages 14 to 21, to increase their parenting skills, reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancies, and assist them in preparing for careers, thus enabling them to be financially responsible for their children.

Prepared for Parent News by Anne S. Robertson.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

77

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

Choosing a Sitter

by Dr. Jeanne Beckman

There have been many discussions and questions regarding how to choose a caregiver for your child. Whether you are looking for an occasional evening sitter, or a regular sitter, it is frequently difficult to find ANYONE who is willing to care for your child, let alone someone who has all of Mary Poppins' good attributes. In Winnetka, Illinois, where many teens are not in great need of the funds generated by sitting, some parents find they must call 10 to 20 teens before they are able to find someone who is available for a particular night. By the time you reach the bottom of your sitter list, your standards tend to lower considerably if you are in a bind (can the sitter speak and walk at the same time). Where are some of the possible places you can find sitters? What are some of the things to look for and to avoid when choosing a sitter?

In many circles, it is not standard practice to ask your friends and acquaintances for the names of sitters because this information is frequently a guarded secret. If they tell you the names of their sitters, these sitters may become unavailable to them when they need them. Frequently, when people do find a sitter they really like, they try to establish a regular time (every Saturday or every other Saturday) and pay the sitter a retainer, regardless of whether they need her on a particular night.

Asking the local high school, parochial school, or college for listings can be a place to start. Our local high school girls club has a listing of girls who are interested in sitting. Also, local colleges will often list sitter jobs on a bulletin board. When you get the names of potential sitters, you must call them, get an idea of experiences they have had, and ask for names and phone numbers of recent references. I am suspicious of any sitter who can only give names of people for whom they sat only one time or for whom they have only sat very recently (unless the sitter is very young, in which case you need to monitor the sitter very closely, frequently using the person first as a mother's helper). Problem behaviors in sitters do not always appear the first time they sit for you. I know of a sitter who was a real hit with the children on the first visit, but who, during the second sitting, convinced the four-year-old that he would die. That child has been slowly revealing other bizarre things this sitter told him and is still terrified to go to sleep after three weeks have passed.

Another difficulty is knowing what to ask the reference. If you ask more open-ended questions, you may get more information, especially if you listen for hesitations, tone of voice, and what the reference is not saying. Ask the ages of her children, and ask her to tell you what the sitter did with her children (reading and doing art projects with the children is definitely better than making the children watch the sitter's favorite TV show). You may get more information than just asking if the children got to bed on time or if the sitter was responsible. Sometimes direct questions can be useful though. Such questions as "Are you still using this person for a sitter" and if not, why not, or "Did this person do anything or fail to do something which might make you hesitate to use her again?" Another question I like is "Do your children like her?" Do not underestimate the ability of your child to "read" the sitter, and do not ignore vague intuitions you have about a particular sitter. Every time I have had a vague sense that a sitter did not seem right, I have heard from my child, "Mommy, she wasn't a very good baby-sitter." Even if your child is too young to communicate in this manner, look for other signs. New fears, new problem behaviors, or some kinds of play with toys can all be signs of exposure to verbal or physical abuse.

I am very grateful when a reference is honest with me. One time, a reference hesitated before responding to my question. I asked her what she did not like about this person. She said she could not put her finger on it, but that her children did not like this particular sitter, which was unusual for her children. I thanked her for her honesty. If you have a bad sitter, and are later used by this sitter as a reference, I feel you have a responsibility to somehow convey the difficulty, even if all you say is "Yes, she sat for me, but I cannot give you any more information." This kind of statement actually conveys lots of information. We do need to help each other with sitters, even if all we do is to say which sitters are not good for our children.

Dr. Beckman is a licensed clinical psychologist who practices in Winnetka, Illinois, providing treatment for children, adults, and families. Please mail order requests to Dr. Jeanne Beckman, 840 Foxdale, Winnetka, IL 60093. There may be a small postage and handling fee for articles. Reproduction permission is not granted for any other purpose than for Parent News for the National Parent Information Network. For more information, call 847-446-1251.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

TV Tune Out '97

Many communities across the country have established periods of time when families turn off their television sets and engage in other activities. Commonly called "TV Tune Out" week, they are often sponsored by local museums.

Starting on Thursday, February 6, through Wednesday, February 12, families in suburban Chicago who wish to experience a week of life without the television set will be turning off their sets. In the communities of Winnetka and Northfield, merchants and local organizations work together to offer families alternatives to watching television.

Some in-home activities include:

- Start a book club for children. All members can read the same book, gather in one member's home, and discuss the book.
- Have a family tournament of favorite board games such as Monopoly, Clue, Sorry, or checkers.
- Set out a jigsaw puzzle on a tabletop where it can be left for several days. Family members can turn to the puzzle, rather than the TV, during TV Tune Out week.
- Identify a favorite book and arrange a trade-off with others and their favorite books.
- Plan a neighborhood progressive dinner. Appetizers can be served at the first house, main course at the next, salad at the third, and dessert can be served at the last house. Children can participate in cooking and decorating their home for this event.
- Each evening, read a chapter from a favorite book aloud, such as the *Wizard of Oz*.
- Gather stories from those who grew up before television was a part of their daily lives.
- Have a winter dinner picnic, spreading the picnic blanket inside on the floor, perhaps in front of the fireplace.
- Have a tea party and listen to different kinds of music than you typically do, or perhaps listen to books on tape from the local library.
- Spend the afternoon with photo albums or old yearbooks.
- Keep a journal of thoughts and feelings during TV Tune Out week. Record fun things you do instead of watching television.

The Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood has identified the following books about television watching that can be read during TV Tune Out week:

Preschool and Beginning Readers:

- *Berenstain Bears: Too Much TV*, by Stan and Jan Berenstain. What is it like for the Berenstain Bears family to live without watching television?
- *Fix-It*, by David McPhail. A story about a little bear who gets up early to watch television, but the TV doesn't work!
- *When the TV Broke*, by Harriet Ziefert. What will Jeffrey do with his time when his television breaks?

Grades 2-3:

- *The Magic Box*, by Barbara Brenner. A story about what happens to a town when the first television appears.

- *The Day Our TV Broke Down*, by Betty Ren Wright. A cartoon addict looks for other ways to spend his time when the television set breaks.
- *The Boy with Square Eyes-A Tale of Televisionitis*, by Juliet and Charles Snape. A fantastic tale about Charlie, whose eyes turn square from watching too much TV.

Grades 3-5:
The Week Mom Unplugged the TVs, by Terry Wolfe Phelan. Steve didn't do anything wrong, yet his mom unplugs the TV! What will he do?!
The Boy Who Turned into a TV Set, by Stephan Manes. A wild story about a boy who watched so much TV, that he turns into a television set.

Source:

Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood Newsletter. (1996, Summer).7(3), 7.

For further information on television watching, turn to past issues of Parent News to read excerpts from *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana M. Zuckerman, Ph.D. Beginning with the August 1996 issue of Parent News, a chapter from the book was excerpted each month.

Also read the following articles, located on the NPIN Web site Resources for Parents:

Monitoring TV Time, by Lilian G. Katz URL
http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/respar/texts/media/tvtime.html

What Do Parents Need To Know about Children's Television Viewing? by Mima Spencer
http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/respar/texts/media/tvview.html

Television Violence: What the Research Says about Its Effect on Young Children, by Jeanne Beckman, Ph.D. http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/respar/texts/media/tvviod96.html

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

"Too Young for Kindergarten!" What Does the Research Say?

by Debbie Reese

When their child turns 5, many parents think the child is ready for kindergarten. However, when they contact the local school district, they often learn that their child's birthday occurs just after the cut-off date for entrance to kindergarten, which makes them "too young" to enroll. Generally, children whose birthdays occur in the autumn months do not meet age-eligibility criteria to be enrolled in kindergarten.

The entrance age for kindergarten varies from district to district and state to state. It is believed that the younger 5-year-olds will experience difficulties socially and academically if they start school with older 5-year-olds. In some states, schools administer a readiness test to determine if a child is "ready" for kindergarten. In some schools, the decision on whether or not to enroll the young child is left to the discretion of the superintendent (Eads, Miller, Ellwein, & Walsh, 1990). Yet many middle-class parents opt to hold their child out of kindergarten until the child turns 6, believing that another year will give their child maturity that will help the child succeed in school.

Research indicates boys are held out of (not enrolled in) kindergarten more frequently than girls (Bellisimo, Sacks, & Mergendoller, 1995). This trend may be explained by studies that suggest that girls (more frequently than boys) demonstrate literacy skills (e.g., able to recognizing letters of the alphabet) and small motor skills (e.g., able to button own coat) earlier than boys (Zill, Collins, West, & Hausek, 1995).

However, some research on the issue of entrance age for kindergarten does not support the idea that younger children are not ready for kindergarten. One study concluded that denying young children entrance to kindergarten is a misguided attempt to ensure positive social adjustment in school. In the study, researchers found that whatever social difficulties the youngest children have early in the school year dissipate as the year progresses. Further, a comparison of report cards of the youngest and oldest children in the class did not show any differences in academic, social, or physical skills (Spitzer, Cupp, & Parke, 1995).

This research suggests that parents' worries about their children not being ready for kindergarten may be unfounded and that parents should enroll 5-year-old children who meet age-entrance requirements in kindergarten, rather than holding them out until they are 6 years of age.

Bellisimo, Y., Sacks, C. H., & Mergendoller, J. R. (1995). Changes over time in kindergarten holding out: Parent and school contexts. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 10(2), 205-222.

Eads, G. M., Miller, A. K., Ellwein, M. C., & Walsh, D. (1990). *Testing for kindergarten readiness: State action and district response*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Boston.

Spitzer, S., Cupp, R., & Parke, R. D. (1995). School entrance age, social acceptance, and self-perceptions in kindergarten and 1st grade. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 10(4), 433-450.

Zill, N., Collins, M. West, J., & Hausek, E. V. (1995). *Approaching kindergarten: A look at preschoolers in the United States*. National Household Education Survey. Statistical Analysis Report. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter Seven: Real and Pretend on TV (see previous issues for chapters 1-6).

This chapter examines the impact of television and make-believe play on children's imagination. Evidence suggests that children fantasize as early as 18 months to 2 years of age, and by 3 years of age, children can be observed using a considerable amount of make-believe play. Many studies have shown several constructive possibilities of pretend play in early child development.

Benefits of Fantasy Play

- Kindergarten and preschool children involved in make-believe play have been found to show positive emotions and smile and laugh often.
- Children who have the capacity for fantasizing are better able to tolerate periods of delay, to defer immediate gratification, to resist temptation, and to be less likely to show anger and distress.
- Evidence shows that children who engage in fantasy play use a more complex vocabulary and grammar.
- Children who engage in make-believe play often take on different roles as part of their play. As a result of this role-playing, children learn to empathize with others.
- Make-believe play has children acting out many roles they will have as they grow up. Children will rehearse games such as playing school, going to the doctor, or taking a trip--activities that help prepare them for the variety of situations they will face later in life.
- Pretend play is important in helping children develop a mental set in which different possibilities and plans can be tried out before deciding on a course of action.
- Evidence suggests that the imaginative capacity is related to the ability to appreciate the art forms--an appreciation that in turn helps to enrich day-to-day life.

Factors in Early Childhood Conducive to Imaginative Development

Research suggests that children who have little opportunity to communicate with adults may participate in less make-believe play. Studies have also found that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds use a limited vocabulary. However, when children from such backgrounds are given a chance to play make-believe games, their vocabulary becomes more diversified, and they use new words and grammatical constructions.

Evidence suggests that adults who take the time to play with, tell stories to, and read to children play a crucial role in the development of their children's imagination. In addition, adults who get children involved in a game or story and then gradually step away to allow the child's own interest and motivation to take over are most likely to encourage spontaneous make-believe play.

Reality and Fantasy on TV

Television employs many techniques to create illusions and a sense of fantasy. While children can understand that drawings (like cartoons) are not real, often children cannot understand when actors create illusions. For example, children might believe that actors are hitting each other in fights when in fact they are missing each other completely. Other ways reality can be distorted is through the use of makeup, various camera angles, costumes, and lighting effects.

Discussion Ideas

1. If your children watch fantasy programs, ask them: "Is the character a real person? Do the people on the program really exist? How do you know? How can you tell when something on TV is real?"
2. Have your children name some programs that depict real people talking about real events, programs that have actors portraying real events, and programs with actors portraying realistic fictional events. Ask them: "How can you tell the difference? What are the actors? What is the difference between an actor and a character?" Include information about how makeup, costumes, and props make people or events seem different than they really are.
3. Discuss programs where animated characters portray realistic events. Ask your children: "In what ways are the Flintstones realistic? In what ways are they pretend?"
4. Discuss programs where animated characters portray impossible events. Ask your children: "In what ways are Batman and Superman realistic? In what ways are they pretend? What other animated characters do impossible things?"
5. Ask your children: "How are cartoon animals realistic? In what ways are most cartoon animals unrealistic? Name some animals that seem to survive impossible danger."
6. Have your children name some programs where actors engage in impossible actions. Ask them: "How can you tell that they are not realistic?"

Activities

1. Set up a chart with the following headings: Draw a Fantasy Character Here; Draw a Real Person Here; Draw a Realistic Character Here. Your children can draw pictures or cut and paste pictures of a fantasy character, a real person, and a realistic character in the space provided. Then they can list the real people and television characters in the correct columns.
2. Have your children list the programs that they watched this week that had real people talking about real events; then the programs that had animated characters. Which type of program did they watch more often?
3. Write a story or poem about an imaginary person.
4. Write a story about the things you did today. Would that make an interesting TV program? Now change the story to make it more exciting or funny.
5. List some characters that are portrayed by actors and as animated characters. Would you rather see

cartoon characters, or would you rather watch a program where the same characters are portrayed by actors?

6. Draw a cartoon character.
7. Which programs use music to create mystery or suspense? List them. Watch carefully this week and write down programs that use music. Turn off the music during an exciting part. How did you like it without the music?
8. If you watch a program that shows a fighting scene, write down the sound effects, props, or makeup that make the scene seem real.
9. If you have watched a TV program about a real person, read a book about the same person. How was the TV story different from the book?

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

Free Publication: "Because You Love Them: A Parent's Planning Guide"

The Children's Welfare League of America developed "Because You Love Them: A Parent's Planning Guide" for parents with HIV disease and other terminal illnesses. The book helps parents plan for their children's future, either on their own or with the assistance of professional counseling sessions or support groups.

The guide helps parents:

- explore their feelings and those of their children;
- decide if, when, and how to tell children, family, and friends about their illness;
- learn about legal choices they have available to them for making permanent plans for their children; and
- learn about resources for information on their illness through clearinghouses, telephone hotlines, resource centers, and other organizations.

"Because... Somebody Loves Me," a companion workbook for children facing the loss of a parent to HIV/AIDS, is also available. The workbook was written by Dottie Ward-Wimmer, the Children's Program Director of the St. Francis Center in Washington, DC, with assistance from over 60 practitioners.

Both publications are available free from the CDC National Aids Clearinghouse, at 800-458-5231. Shipping and handling fees are $5.50 per copy.

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

Where Families Can Obtain Tax Information

The following resources may help working families prepare tax returns for 1996:

- "Earned Income Credit Outreach Kit" contains information families need to understand and access the Earned Income Credit (EIC). The kit is available in English or Spanish and can be obtained by calling the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at 202-408-1080. The first copy is free of charge.
- "How To Use the Federal Child Care Tax Credit" is a two-page information guide available from the Child Care Action Campaign. To obtain a copy, call 212-239-0138 or send an email request to hn5746@handsnet.org.
- A fact sheet about the Earned Income Credit or the Child and Dependent Care Credit can be obtained from the National Women's Law Center. Call 202-588-0138 and ask for Sharon Jenkins.

In addition, the Internal Revenue Service has several publications on the EIC, the Child and Dependent Care Credit, and information for parents who employ a provider to care for their child in the home. To obtain the following publications, call 800-829-3676 or check with your local library.

#596 - Earned Income Credit
#503 - Child and Dependent Care Expenses
#926 - Employment Taxes for Household Employers
#15 - Employers Tax Guide (Circular "E")

Free assistance for low-income workers can be obtained from the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. For contact information, call 800-829-1040.

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Of Interest

Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences

by Dawn Ramsburg

Conference time is just around the corner for some parents, and it may already be here for others. Parent-teacher conferences are traditionally the most formal means of communication between parents and teachers, and they should be seen as providing a rich opportunity to build communication and understanding between the home and school. Yet the value of parent-teacher conferences to parents, teachers, and children depends on the active participation of each person involved. In addition, parent-teacher conferences are likely to be more successful if there have been many other opportunities for communication during the year.

However, parent-teacher conferences can be stressful for many parents. Working parents may have to rush to a conference early in the morning before work, take time off at lunch, or wait until the end of a long day to meet with their child's teacher. Other parents may be anxious about meeting with their child's teacher because of their own school-related experiences as a child. Either way, this stress and anxiety can lead to strained or shortened conversations between the teacher and parent which will not benefit them or the child. To reduce this tension and stress, it is very important for parents to come to a conference well-prepared so that the time can be spent efficiently.

How To Prepare For Parent-Teacher Conferences

Before the Conference

It is important for parents to discuss the conference with their children. By including the children in this discussion, parents can generate a list of questions and concerns relevant to their children as well as themselves.

Parents should:

- Ask their children if there is anything important to ask the teacher.
- Ask their children what they like best about school.
- Ask their children who their special friends are.
- Ask their children if there are things they would like to do more often at school.
- Discuss with their children whether any family problems should be mentioned to the teacher. If so, how much should be said about the problem?
- Make a list of what they want the teacher to know about their children.
- Make a list of questions to ask the teacher.

Possible questions to ask include:

For preschool-aged children:

1. How is my child progressing developmentally?
2. Does my child do really well in some area that I can reinforce at home?
3. Does my child need special help with anything?
4. Does my child make friends easily?

5. Does my child participate in group activities?
6. What is my child like during the day?
7. What can I do to continue the learning process at home?

For older children (elementary-school age and older):

1. What is my child studying this year?
2. What aspects of school does my child appear to enjoy the most?
3. What are my child's best/worst subjects?
4. How well does my child get along with classmates?
5. Has my child completed assignments regularly?
6. Does my child willingly participate in class activities?
7. Does my child follow directions?
8. Have you noticed any changes in my child's behavior during the year?
9. What tests has my child had or will my child have?
10. What do the test scores tell me about my child's progress?
11. How does my child handle taking tests?
12. Does my child need help in any academic area or need to be referred to school specialists?
13. How much learning do you require be done independently?
14. What do you do to accommodate individual differences among children?
15. What expectations do you have for children in your class?

Once parents have made their list of questions, it is important to prioritize the list. This ordering allows parents to have their most important questions listed first in case time with the teacher is limited.

The Day of the Conference

Parents need to notify the teacher if they cannot attend the conference at the scheduled time. In addition, parents should initiate rescheduling the conference if needed.

Also, parents should be sure to arrive at the conference on time. Teachers often have several conferences scheduled in a row, so time is usually not available to continue discussions.

During the Conference

Parents should start the conference off on a positive note. Positive comments can be anything from telling the teacher how much their child likes to draw, how pleased they are with their child's reading, or to even saying thank you for taking the time to meet. These comments show the teacher that they appreciate his or her time and that they are interested in working together.

- After this brief opener, parents can ask the teacher their most important questions.

Once these questions have been discussed, depending on how much time is still available, parents can:

- Ask the teacher for examples of their child's work.
- If there is equipment in the room that they are not familiar with, parents can ask how it is used and for what purpose.

Finally, before parents leave, they need to ask the teacher what they can do to continue helping with their child's education. Also, they should have the teacher explain anything they do not understand.

If there was not enough time to discuss all of their concerns, parents should ask to meet again.

After the Conference

Once the conference is over, a parent's work is not yet finished.

Parents should:

- Discuss the conference with their child, including any "action plan" that has been agreed upon with the teacher.
- Act quickly on any suggestions made by the teacher (e.g., schedule an eye appointment if needed, go to the library to get any books the child needs).
- Keep working with the teacher by staying in touch to discuss the child's progress.

It is important that children feel that their teacher and parent are working together on their behalf. A good partnership between the home and school will help make sure that children get the best education possible.

Sources:

Calvert County Public Schools. (1996, October). *Questions for parent-teacher conferences.* URL http://calvertnet.k12.md.us/depts/pupilservice/qsptconferences.html

Illinois Education Association-NEA. *Making the most of parent-teacher conferences.* URL http://www.ieanea.org/parents/ptc.html

Peterson, Evelyn. *Parent-teacher conferences.* URL http://www.earlychildhood.com/articles/artptc.html

Vermont-NEA. *Making parent-teacher conferences work for your child.* URL http://www.vtnea.org/ntneal3.html

YMCA. *YMCA parent tips: Parent-teacher conferences-Staying in touch for your child's sake.* URL http://www.ymca.net/c/7/2.html

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

EXPECT THE BEST Sponsored by Girls and Technology

This Girls and Technology video aims to enliven discussion, offer new approaches, question and identify the challenges, as well as move educators and parents to action as they seek to provide the best education for young women. The video notes that addressing this issue is critical since by the year 2000 80 percent of non-blue-collar jobs will require a solid grounding in math and science. Those with competency in technology will receive the highest paying jobs. There is also a resource guide available titled "Girls & Technology."

Produced by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools
228 Main St.
Concord, MA 01742
Telephone: 508-287-4485
Email: ncgs@ncgs.org
URL: http://www.ncgs.org/

GIRLS AND THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES: SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS (March 12, 1993)

Since a majority of jobs in the 21st century will be rooted in science and technology and over 50 percent of the work force will be women, it is important that educators understand the needs of young women and encourage them to excel in the physical sciences. This guide covers a variety of topics including: (1) Experts Speak about the Myths and Messages of Physical Science, (2) Practicality and Passion: Gender Issues in Science, (3) The Work and Recommendations of Physical Science Practitioners, (4) The National Debate on Assessment: Implications for Girls and the Physical Sciences, (5) Successful Models Intervention and Presentation Methodologies, and (6) Student Experiences as Leaders in Training.

Produced by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools
228 Main St.
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Email: ncgs@ncgs.org
URL: http://www.ncgs.org

HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL LISTEN

This video series features the work of Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish as they facilitate a group of parents through six communication sessions. These sessions include: (1) Helping Children Deal with Their Feelings, (2) Engaging Cooperation, (3)Alternatives to Punishment, (4) Encouraging Autonomy, (5) Praise, and (6) Freeing Children from Playing Roles. The series is based on the information found in the popular book of the same title and is carefully coordinated with a participant's manual. There is also an audio version of the program. Price for the video workshop kit is $190.00.

Faber/Mazlish Workshops, LLC

P.O. Box 37
Rye, NY 10508
Telephone: 800-944-8584

RECONSTRUCTING THE PRIMARY YEARS

This 24-minute video offers educators and parents insight into a developmentally appropriate classroom, how to integrate and assess curriculum organized around individual and group projects, and creating communities of learners. The video also describes and shows examples of age-appropriate practice and individual styles of learning. There is a discussion of family-centered approaches to parent involvement and how observations assessment is incorporated into the primary classroom.

Available from:
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
1033 K St.
Lincoln, NE 68508
Telephone: 402-476-8055

MY KIND OF PLACE: IDENTIFYING QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

As a work/family resource, this 24-minute video could be used by teachers, child care professionals, students, libraries, and parents. The video discusses many concerns of parents when choosing a provider, including a family home care provider. It also shows the concerns of child care providers and how they respond to parents questions as well as developing their program. The video includes many visual examples of daycare environments including a home daycare.

The Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association
1628 Elliot Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for January 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

1. **Carter, Margie. (1996, July-August). Communicating with parents. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 110, 80-83. PS 525 874.**

   This article discusses five strategies that can enhance the communication among parents and early childhood educators: (1) keep parents well informed about what is happening in the classroom; (2) help parents to introduce themselves in the classroom; (3) create dialogue in newsletters and bulletins; (4) post questions rather than reports; and (5) disseminate ideas of successful partnerships.

2. ***Guidelines for family support practice*. (1996). Available from: Family Resource Coalition, 200 South Michigan Ave., 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604. PS 024 742.**

   Family support programs have proliferated in many different settings in response to an increasing emphasis in the public policy arena on family support strategies. These guidelines for effective family support practice represent the consensus of family support practitioners as assessed in focus groups with over 2,000 staff and parent participants. Chapter 1 of the guide, "The Family Support Story," discusses the need for family support, the development of the family support movement, and family support premises and principles. Chapters 2 through 6 present guidelines and key practices related to the following general areas of practice or themes identified in the family support principles: (1) relationship building; (2) enhancement of family capacity; (3) affirmation of diversity; (4) programs in communities; and (5) program planning, governance, and administration. Each practice chapter provides an introductory overview, guidelines for practice, and challenges in practice. The bulk of each chapter is devoted to guidelines for translating a principle into practice. The guidelines are practice goals, with key practices described as the actions necessary to achieve these goals. Practice examples from actual programs illustrate the application of the various strategies described. Chapter 7, "Looking to the Future," discusses how guidelines for family support can inform practice, training, and education of family support workers, research and evaluation, and public policy. Three appendices contain recommended resources, describe the study's methodology, and delineate the premises and principles of family support.

3. **McHale, Susan M., & Crouter, Ann C. (1996). The family contexts of children's sibling relationships. In *Sibling relationships: Their causes and consequences: Vol. 10. Advances in applied developmental psychology*, (pp. 173-195). Norwood, NJ: Ablex. PS 024 685.**

   Unlike much previous research on sibling relationships, which emphasizes the congruence across various types of family experiences, the research described in this article explored between-family differences in patterns of experiences within families. The work is built upon Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Magnusson's interactional perspective, as well as ideas from family sociology and social psychology. This article targets several themes emanating from the two main perspectives and shows how they have been applied in work on sibling relationships. Specifically, it considers the issue of sibling activities as important relationship phenomena, reviews work on contextual differences in children's sibling experiences, and describes ways of understanding patterns in children's sibling and family relationships. Two longitudinal studies form the basis for this discussion: the Penn State Family Relationships Project and the Penn State Study of Children's Everyday Experiences with Siblings.

4. **Decker, Larry E., And Others. (1996).** ***Teachers manual for parent and community involvement.*** **Available from: Florida Atlantic University Foundation, Community Education, Room 260, College of Education, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; telephone: 407-367-3563; fax: 407-367-3613 ($17.95, plus $3 shipping. For rush orders, add $5. Discount on orders for 2 or more copies). PS 024 034.**

   Providing training for teachers and educators in home-school-community involvement is important for an obvious reason: Schools don't operate in a vacuum. To be successful in the primary mission of educating the community's children, educators need to know a great deal about the community and the families from which the children come. The focus of this manual is the crucial role the classroom teacher plays in parent and community involvement efforts. It may be used as a reference, as the basis for a course, or in individual units for topical presentations. After an introductory unit on the social environment and forces that are necessitating educational reform, the text covers: (1) demographics and trends influencing public education, (2) changing attitudes, (3) what the research is saying, (4) a framework for parent involvement, (5) principles for successful programs and strategies for reducing home-school barriers, (6) implementation strategies, (7) building bridges between home and school, and (8) school volunteer programs. Information on the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning and and a list of members of the National Coalition for Parent and Community Involvement in Education (NCPIE) are also included.

5. **Erwin, Elizabeth J. (Ed.). (1996).** ***Putting children first: Visions for a brighter future for young children and their families.*** **Available from: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624 (Stock No. 2444, $40). PS 024 709.**

   This book confronts critical issues affecting young children and their families. Its three sections discuss social problems and challenges, care and education issues, and a model for the 21st century. Chapters are accompanied by parental essays and by professional essays suggesting visions for the new millenium. The book's introduction consists of "Reenvisioning the 21st Century for Children and Families" (Janko and Peck) and "History of the Development of Social Policies Affecting Young Children" (Jackson). The first section contains the following chapters: "Growing Up in a Violent World" (Groves); "Poverty in the Lives of Young Children: Multifaceted Problem, Single-Focus Policies" (Larner and Collins); "The Impact of Maternal Substance Abuse on Young Children" (Kaplan-Sanoff); and "Unsuspected Environmental Causes of Health and Education Problems" (Rapp and Kochanski). This section concludes with two essays: "What Would an Ideal World Look Like for Young Children and Their Families?" (Blackman) and "Creating an Ideal World for Children" (Washington). The second section consists of the following chapters: "The Paradox of Diversity in Early Care and Education" (New and Mallory); "The Complexities of Child Care" (Daniel); "The Promise and Challenge of Supporting All Children in Natural Environments" (Erwin); and "Partnerships for Collaboration" (Erwin and Rainforth). This section concludes with two essays: "Families, Child Care, and Caring" (Balaban) and "All Children Must Know and Learn from One Another" (Wessels). The third section contains the essays: "The 21st Century for Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families" (Gallagher) and "A Quality Early Childhood Service Delivery System for the 21st Century" (Galinksy, Friedman, and Lombardi).

Publications identified with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UMI (800-732-0616) or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

National Fathers' Network

Sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the National Fathers' Network (NFN) was established in 1990 to provide resources and support to fathers and families of children with special needs. Membership is over 4,000, including fathers, health care providers, and educators from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sweden, South Africa, Pakistan, Israel, Hong Kong, and Japan. The NFN maintains the following programs: (1) a Demonstration Father Support Program, in Bellevue, Washington, in which nearly 100 men attend biweekly support meetings, father-child activities, and social functions; (2) Father Support Programs in 36 states; (3) Father-to-Father Mentoring Project; (4) Curriculum Development designed to help fathers, families, and professionals understand the unique parenting concerns of men whose children are disabled or chronically ill; (5) the National Fathers' Network Newsletter; (6) HIV Family Support and Leadership; and (7) Inclusive Health Care Delivery.

Contact:
James May
Kindering Center
16120 NE 8th St.
Bellevue, WA 98008-3937
Telephone: 206-747-4004
Fax: 206-284-2859

Birth Gazette

The Birth Gazette operates a midwife/birthing center and a publishing concern. Although the primary focus of Birth Gazette is the publication of a quarterly magazine, the organization also produces video tapes and sponsors an annual conference on midwifery, childbirth, and reproduction.

Birth Gazette is a quarterly magazine about childbirth and reproduction. It covers a wide range of topics, including childbirth practices, the politics of childbirth, and childbirth techniques, economics, and folklore. Articles published in the magazine represent information gleaned from mainstream as well as medical journals. Published since 1977, current readership is over 10,000.

Contact:
Pamela Hunt
P.O. Box 207
Summertown, TN 38483
Telephone: 615-964-2472
Fax: 615-964-3798

National Center for Fathering

The National Center for Fathering focuses on providing fathers with practical resources. Among the programs sponsored by the National Center for Fathering are: (1) a nationwide radio program, (2) a site on the World Wide Web: http://www.fathers.com, (3) a quarterly magazine Today's Father, (4) seminars and workshops designed to help fathers improve parenting skills, and (5) resources including books, tapes, and curricula for new fathers, fathers of preschool and/or school-age children, teens, empty-nesters, and grandfathers. The Center also provides resources to social and government agencies, the media, and the private sector.

Contact:
The National Center for Fathering
P.O. Box 413888
Kansas City, MO 64141
Telephone: 800-593-DADS
Fax: 913-384-4665
Email: ncf@aol.com
URL: http://www.fathers.com

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Babyhood

Description: This site is dedicated to providing information about babies (birth to approximately 24 months). Resources are available on the following topics: (1) Child Care, (2) Health and Safety, (3) Parenting, (4) Products/Services, (5) Recreation and (6) Miscellaneous.

Address: http://www.babyhood.com

Name: Children Now

Description: Children Now is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works for America's children by producing reports on the status of children and by developing tools for local leaders and families to make children a priority. The site features: (1) information on community involvement. (2) publications, and, (3) links for various topics.

Address: http://www.childrennow.org

Name: Children's Television Workshop Online

Description: Children's Television Workshop Online provides information for parents and children. This site features articles from *Sesame Street Parents* that provide insight into preschoolers' physical, intellectual, and emotional development. This site also features news, consumer information. and stories to inform, entertain, and empower parents. Activities for children are featured as well.

Address: http://www.ctw.org/index.htm

Name: Fathering Magazine

Description: Fathering Magazine is an online magazine especially for fathers. The magazine features the following sections: (1) feature articles, (2) news headlines, (3) interviews, (4) true stories, (5) health and sex, (6) fiction, (7) fathering in the 90s, and (8) fathering advisor. In addition, this site offers a Fathering Home Page, a bibliography of published material of interest to fathers, and links to other resources.

Address: http://www.fathermag.com/

Name: For Parents of Preemies

Description: This site is a table of contents to information for parents of premature infants. Topics include: (1) the birth of a preemie, (2) the neonatal intensive care unit, (3) common problems, (4) preparing for discharge, (5) questions after discharge, (6) understanding/helping your preemie, (7) emotional support, (8) later problems of preemies, (9) requested topics, and (10) resources for help and support.

Address: http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/childrenshosp/Parents_of_Preemies/index.html

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Name: Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International

Description: The mission of the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI) is to provide advocacy, education, and support for gay and lesbian persons in child-nurturing roles and their families. The site provides several resources including: (1) the Parent Network (bimonthly electronic newsletter), (2) lists of chapters, and (3) links to related sites. In addition, various statistics are available.

Address: http://abacus.oxy.edu/QRD/www/orgs/glpci/home.htm

Name: Lifetime On-line Parenting

Description: Lifetime On-line Parenting allows parents to download tips and advice from two of its television series: "What Every Baby Knows," which features Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, and "Kids These Days," which features David Ellkind. In addition, the House Calls section provides answers to parenting questions. Parents can also connect with other parents through the Mother Lode, Dad's Diary, and/or the Parent's Corner Chat Room.

Address: http://www.lifetimetv.com/parenting/parenting.html

Name: Mapping Your Future:

Sponsor: Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)

Description: This site contains information on how to select a school, pay for school, and plan a career for middle and high school students, college students, and parents. The information provided includes college admissions and financial aid calendar, information on standardized tests, links to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook, and links to various Web sites, including scholarship sites.

Address: http://mapping-your-future.org/

Name: March of Dimes

Description: The March of Dimes is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health of babies by reducing birth defects and infant mortality. The site provides information on having a healthy baby and what to do if there is a problem. Features include: (1) information on having a healthy baby, (2) birth defects information, (3) infant health statistics, (4) publications, and (5) description of worksite programs.

Address: http://www.modimes.org

Name: Mom's On-line

Description: Mom's On-line is an online forum created for and by mothers of all ages and stages of child-rearing. It serves to support, nurture, and entertain moms as well as be a source of information. Moms On-line offers: (1) Ma'zine (weekly publication), (2) Mom to Mom (tips and answers to FAQs), (3) a chat room and message board, (4) Mother News (weekly newsletter), and (5) Moms On-line Direct.

Address: http://www.momsonline.com

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for February 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

Call For Papers

CONFERENCE: FAMILIES, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE

DATE: OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 1, 1997

PLACE: CHICAGO, IL

DEADLINE: ABSTRACTS ARE DUE BY MARCH 1, 1997

DESCRIPTION: The ERIC System and the National Parent Information Network are accepting 500-word abstracts of papers to be presented at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference in October 1997.

Abstracts will be accepted for the following conference strands:

- Using technology to link schools, families, and students
- TV and movies: Mass media effects on children and family life
- The Internet and its influence on family life
- Using technology to monitor children's activities
- Disability and giftedness: Technology and the families of exceptional children
- Equity issues in family access to computer technology

Abstracts (200 words) may also be submitted for poster sessions that highlight particular projects or products related to the topics of the conference.

Abstracts may be submitted by postal mail or electronically to the addresses below.

CONTACT:

Anne Robertson, Program Chair
National Parent Information Network
ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center,
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 800-583-4135 or 217-333-1386
Fax: 217-333-3767
Email: ericeece@uiuc.edu

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Science & Technology Week '97 will be the week of April 20-26. During this week, scientists and engineers will be available to answer questions. This year's theme is Webs, Wires, and Waves, which focuses on communications and communications technologies.

If you have a question, you can call 800-682-2716 on Wednesday, April 23, or email asknstw@nsf.gov

Contact:

Michael Fluharty
NSTW
c/o National Science Foundation
Room 1245
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230
Telephone: 703-306-1070
Email: nstw@nsf.gov
URL: http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nstw/start.htm

CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE: Character Education Partnership

Date: February 7-8, 1997

Place: San Diego, California

Description: Annual Forum on Character Education Partnership

Contact:

809 Franklin St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-9515

CONFERENCE: Council for Exceptional Children

Date: February 13-15, 1997

Place: San Jose, California

Description: The Technology Conference of the Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

Contact:

750 Oakland Ave.
Suite 104
Oakland, CA 94611-4401
Telephone: 510-658-0119

CONFERENCE: Learning Disabilities Association of America

Date: February 19-22, 1997

Place: Chicago, Illinois

Description: International Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America

Contact:

4156 Library Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Telephone: 412-341-1515

CONFERENCE: Learning and the Arts: New Strategies for Promoting Student Success

Date: February 22-23, 1997

Place: New York

Description: ArtsConnection, New York City's largest arts-in-education organization is planning a national symposium called "Learning and the Arts: New Strategies for Promoting Student Success." This event is intended to bring together educators, artists, researchers, and policymakers for discussions about the impact of the arts on education, and the place of arts education in the perspective of national school reform efforts.

Contact:

Victoria Rosner
Email: vpr4@columbia.edu

CONFERENCE: Fifth Annual Conference on Parent Education

Date: February 27-March 1, 1997

Place: University of North Texas; Denton, Texas

Description: The Fifth Annual Conference on Parent Education is sponsored by the Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas.

Contact:

Amanda Barksdale at CCECM
PO Box 5344
Denton, TX 76203-0344
Telephone: 817-565-3484
Fax: 817-565-3801
Email: barksdal@scs.unt.edu

CONFERENCE: National PTA

Date: March 10-13, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Legislative Conference of the National PTA

Contact:

700 N. Wabash Ave.
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 312-6670-6782

CONFERENCE: Children's Defense Fund

Date: March 11-15, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Annual Conference of the Children's Defense Fund

Contact:

Children's Defense Fund
25 E St., NW
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-662-3674

CONFERENCE: Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance

Date: March 20-22, 1997

Place: Orlando, Florida

Description: This is the Joint International Conference on Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance. General sessions, workshops, panels, exhibits, and networking activities will address the various forms of religious, racial, and ethnic intolerance among school-age children; programs that schools, communities, and churches may use to reduce intolerance; the legal and policy implications of creating and implementing various school and public policies on hate crimes; and programs for effective collaborations. The keynote speaker will be Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Contact:

Telephone: 800-537-4903
Fax: 941-778-6818
Email: 102630.2245@compuserve.com

CONFERENCE: Strengthening America's Families

Date: March 23-25, 1997

Place: Washington Vista Hotel; Washington, DC

Description: Strengthening America's Families is a national training conference and a showcase of model family programs for delinquency prevention. This conference features America's most effective parent and family life training programs which are presented and discussed by the creators of the programs. Professionals from child, youth, and family agencies, public schools, Head Start, Boys and Girls Clubs, health and mental health centers, law enforcement, and empowerment zones are encouraged to attend.

Contact:

Barry Bluth
Telephone: 801-581-8498

CONFERENCE: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)

Date: April 16-19, 1997

Place: Omni-Sheraton Hotel; Washington, DC

Description: The NCCCC conference features daily keynote speakers, tours of campus children's centers, a workshop track for new directors, and training for people interested in lobbying for change in Washington, DC. A special track for teachers will also be available.

Contact:

Gail Solit
Gallaudet University
Telephone: 202-651-5130
Fax: 202-651-5531
Email: gasolit@gallua.gallaudet.edu

CONFERENCE: National School-Age Care Association Conference

Date: April 17-19, 1997

Place: Orlando, FL

Description: Master the MAGIC (Making a Genuine Impact on Children) of the 1997 National School-Age Care Association Conference.

Contact:

Florida School Age Child Care Coalition
PO Box 348
Christmas, FL 32709-0348
Telephone: 407-568-6497

CONFERENCE: Family Literacy: The Power and the Promise

Date: April 20-22, 1997

Place: Louisville, Kentucky

Description: This is the Sixth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy presented by the National Center for Family Literacy. Sessions will include such topics as what the future holds and family literacy's place in it; welfare reform and how it will affect family literacy programs; and the top thinkers in family literacy.

Contact:

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza
325 W. Main St., Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Telephone: 502-584-1133

CONFERENCE: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) "La Semana del Nino (Week of the Young Child)" Educator's Institute

Date: April 22-24, 1997

Place: Omni Hotel; San Antonio, Texas

Description: The Fourth Annual IDRA early childhood education training institute. Featured topics include: restructuring for success, multi-age practices, the role of play in early childhood, and involving parents.

Contact:

Hilaria Bauer or Carol Chavez
Telephone: 210-684-8180

CONFERENCE: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities

Date: May 18-20, 1997

Place: Biscayne Bay Hotel; Miami, Florida

Description: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities is intended to provide a forum on best appropriate practices and services for all children and families; to build communities that value and support the diversity of families and caregivers in the nurturing of young children; to present innovation, leadership, and effective collaboration in working with and on behalf of children and families; and to showcase the most effective and highest quality services and programs for children and families.

Contact:

Luis Hernandez
Telephone: 305-375-4670

CONFERENCE: National Head Start Association

Date: May 28-31, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: This is the Annual Conference of the National Head Start Association.

Contact:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St., Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-0875

Return to the Parent News for February 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for March 1997

Volume 3, Number 3

- What's New on NPIN

- March's Feature:
  Fathers Do Make a Difference
  by James May
  Project Director, National Fathers' Network

- Community Spotlight:
  Building Family-Community Traditions
  by Debbie A. Reese

- Of Interest
  - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
  - *Healthy Eating Habits for Toddlers and Teens* by Anne S. Robertson
  - *Getting Your Preschoolers to Clean Their Rooms*
  - *National Survey of Fathers and Families Programs*
  - *The Controversy Over Bilingual Education* by Debbie Reese
  - *The Education of Down Syndrome Children* by Debbie Reese
  - *Parenting in an Online World*
  - *Why Should You Read to Infants*
  - *Principals on Call for Kids: National Principals' Hotline*

- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites

- The Parenting Calendar

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Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for March 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during February 1997

NPIN now has a search feature by which you can search for words in the full text of any document on NPIN. To use the search feature, return to the NPIN Home Page and choose *Search NPIN* from the menu.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

- *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities. Chapter 5. Parent Involvement in Preschool* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section")
  This chapter discussed parent involvement in Head Start, new directions in parent involvement, and the family support model for parent involvement. The chapter also offers suggestions for increasing parent involvement in preschool.
- *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators, and Communities. Chapter 8. Organizations Providing Parent and Family Involvement Resources* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section")
  This chapter list resource organizations.
- *What about Fathers* (in the "Parents and Families in Society" section; also in the "Early Childhood: Family/Peer Relationships" section)
  This text suggests ways to foster fathers' involvement with their children.
- *Why Do We Need Vitamin A?* (in the "Children's Health and Nutrition" section)
  Explains the role of vitamin A in the body and lists sources of vitamin A.
- *Why Do We Need the B Vitamins?* (in the "Children's Health and Nutrition" section)
  Explains the role of the B vitamins in the body and lists sources of the B vitamin .
- *Why Do We Need Vitamin C?* (in the "Children's Health and Nutrition" section)
  Explains the role of the vitamin C in the body and lists sources of the vitamin C .
- *Why Do We Need Iron?* (in the "Children's Healtnd Nutrition" section)
  Explains the role of the iron in the body and lists sources of iron .

Several new ERIC Digests have also been added to topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section. The digests are actually located on the ERIC/EECE Web site.

- *Father/Male Involvement in Early Childhood Programs* (in the "Parents and Familes in Society" section"; also in the "Early Childhood--Family/Peer Relationships" section)
  This ERIC digest discusses several ways for getting fathers or other significant males involved in the preschool programs of children, such as specifying goals, acknowledging resistance to initiatives,

and identifying significant role models.

- *Grandparents as Parents: A Primer for Schools* (in the "Parents and Familes in Society" section")
  This ERIC digest reports the demographics of grandparents as parents and discusses ways for schools to help grandparents and grandchildren.
- *Working with Shy or Withdrawn Students.* (in the "Parents and Schools as Partners" section; also in the "Helping Children Learn at Home" section)
  This ERIC digest outlines the varieties and causes of shyness in the classroom, and suggests strategies for coping with shy or withdrawn students. This digest is on the ERIC/EECE Web site.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- Communicating with Parents, *Childcare Information Exchange,* 110, p.80-83, article by Margie Carter.
- *Guidelines for Family Support Practice* from the Family Resource Coalition.
- The Family Context of Children's Sibling Relationships in*Sibling Relationships: Their Causes and Consequences. Volume 10. Advances in Applied Developmental Psychology,* article authored by Susan M. McHale and Ann C. Crouter.
- *Teacher's Manual for Parent and Community Involvement* by Larry E. Decker and others.
- *Putting Children First: Visions for a Brighter Future for Young Children and Their Families* by Elizabeth J. Erwin, Ed.

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- National Father's Network
- Birth Gazette
- National Center for Fathering

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Go to top of page.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Special Feature

Fathers DO Make a Difference

by James May, Project Director, National Fathers' Network

This past spring I gave a keynote address at an early childhood conference, with over 1,200 special education teachers, providers, and family members in attendance. The title of my presentation was, "Fathers: The Forgotten Parent." It was a special occasion for me as my 84-year-old dad was in the audience and hearing me speak for the first time. There was an emotional strength and poignancy to my remarks. Upon completing the speech, I was approached by a young woman. After complimenting me for the talk, she remarked, "I almost didn't come today. When I looked at the program last night, I was angry that someone was speaking about fathers. I just couldn't see what that had to do with families of children with disabilities. Was I ever wrong."

This comment captures much of the past decade and my work with fathers of children with special needs, and the providers who are a part of their lives. Despite our embracing the principles of family-centered care, our awareness about the drastic changes in family demographics and how economics have made 70% of all homes in America dual income households, the role of fathers still remains ambiguous and unclear.

I started this job in the fall of 1986 with the sole task of starting father support groups for men whose children had disabilities. I always remember my first session; three people were in attendance, and the lone father hardly said a word all evening. Ultimately, I answered my own questions and drove home wondering just what I had gotten myself into.

Early on, when telling teachers and health care personnel about my goal of enhanced father involvement, the typical response would be: "Gosh, that's great, but you don't think men will really show up, do you?" That attitude persisted for years, and still does in many subtle ways, but come they did. There are now over 80 fathers' programs in 36 states and Canada. There are 14 programs in California alone, and two states, California and Washington, have statewide networks. There are three fathers' programs in New Zealand. Inquiries have been received from literally every region of the world. With few exceptions (our Bellevue program has more than 100 participants), the programs are not large. What counts is that increasing numbers of men are fully involved and active members in their children's lives and the health care decisions that affect them.

In 1986, our organization was the only federally funded program advocating for fathers of children with special health care needs. In 1997, that is still the case. One can do a MEDLINE search and find fewer than 30 articles about fathers of children with disabilities. Thus, while interest and concern for fathers have improved, the actual programs and research regarding men continues to be inadequate. Few males enter the field of early childhood education, and those that do often realize how isolated they are. Where I work, the Kindering Center Neurodevelopmental Center for children birth to 3, there are 30 staff--28 women and 2 men. Neither of us is directly involved with the children (physical and occupational therapy, speech and classroom). The reasons for this lack of male involvement are many: low salaries, poor recruitment by colleges and universities, a failure by men to see this work as important and of great consequence, and social service agencies unwilling to search out, train, and employ men.

Children lose out when this happens. One fact has not changed over the years--children need men in their lives. The research is eminently clear about the results of such involvement: children develop enhanced empathy and sensitivity to others; personal independence is increased as is a child's sexual identity and perspective for the future. The building of healthy, appropriate relationships is elevated.

The stigma that men do not want to be involved in their children's lives persists. Being the family breadwinner is still seen as the primary function for men. Corporate America, despite limited family medical leave provisions, generally embraces this stereotype. Yet one of the fastest growing populations in the United States is the single-father, full-custodial home. About 1.3 million fathers are in such a position, a 100% increase in the past decade. What they need are resources and support, flexible hours, and a service provider system that makes them know they are welcome and needed in the care of their children. All men need such supports!

What has sustained me through the years are the men themselves. They have shared their pain, their losses, their joys and hopes. In particular, I have been profoundly touched by men whose children have HIV. Often seen as pariahs, many of these men live in a world of profound isolation and guilt, raising their sick children in an environment of non-existent support or understanding. Yet when they meet other men, they learn they are not alone. They discover that reaching out for help is an act of strength. They all agree that involvement with their children has given them new definitions of fatherhood; they are more patient, they let go and live more fully in the moment, and they openly play with, hug, and love their kids. Letting tears flow after so many years "of being strong" is a relief--never an embarrassment--and good humor and fraternity bond the men together.

In an article about his 3-year-old son Alex, born with the complications from a prenatal stroke, John Tierney of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, captures the essence of what many men are learning from their children about fatherhood.

> Alex has helped me discover the unyielding positive person within myself. He has taught me about courage, discipline, and hope. He has helped me to define myself and my goals. He has made me realize that being a loving husband and father is what truly defines a man's worth.

Are health care and educational settings increasingly "father friendly?" Perhaps. Are the stereotypes of men as incompetent, boozing womanizers changing? Slightly. Are men changing and learning? Absolutely! The challenge for all of us was articulated in 1989 by Randi Wolf and certainly remains the same today:

> Children need and deserve the love and attention of both parents. Let's work together so that every parent is fully respected and every child has the opportunity to establish close bonds with both men and women right from the start. There is nothing more critical to the long-range future of our species than raising our children well. As there is nothing more difficult, it makes sense to muster all the forces available. In this spirit, let's . . . welcome fathers as full and equal partners in this task.

Sources:

Wolf, R. (1989). Partnerships beyond pretense: A challenge to moms and dads. *Family Resource*

Coalition, 8(3), 3.

About the author:

James May is the Project Director of the National Fathers' Network (NFN), a federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau program, and is supported by the Kindering Center in Bellevue, Washington. He is an educator and certified mental health counselor and has been involved with families and young people for more than 30 years. He advocates for fathers and families of children with special needs through trainings, development of mentoring and support programs, curriculum development, and publication of a tri-yearly newsletter. The Network's current initiatives include enhanced programs for fathers in health care settings and improved health care for rural and inner city families and for families of children with HIV. The NFN produces a monthly column, "Fathers' Voices," in *Exceptional Parent* magazine and manages a Web page (http://www.fathersnetwork.org).

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Community Spotlight

Building Family-Community Traditions

by Debbie A. Reese

Editor's note: This month, Community Spotlight departs from the format used in past issues. In this edition, we introduce the notion that, often, families in communities across the country engage in activities that are not based on intervention by concerned leaders or community agencies but, instead, are based on activities whose roots are in traditions handed down from one generation to the next.

Typically, these traditions are not intended to address a problem but seem to have as a foundation the desire to encourage unity and cohesion among members of the family and/or community. This motivation may exist at a very subtle level of awareness or at a very explicit level of awareness. Regardless, these activities help members connect with each other in ways that help form bonds members can count on for support.

To begin, we share with our readers the experiences of NPIN team member, Debbie Reese.

I have a fond memory that I think of from time to time. In my mind's eye, I can see my grandfather, grinning at me, with a big chunk of mud on part of his teeth, lips, and face. Mud?! You may exclaim. Let me explain...

I am Pueblo Indian from one of the small Pueblos north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Visitors to New Mexico often remark that the homes there seem to rise right out of the earth. In a certain sense, they do. Constructed of adobe, homes are made of materials that frequently come from just a few feet away from the site of the home.

As a child, I was part of a large, extended family. Both sets of grandparents were a big part of my life, as were cousins, uncles, and aunts. Many homes in the Pueblo and Hispanic communities of New Mexico started out as single-room structures, large enough to provide shelter for a husband and wife. As children were born, other rooms were added on to provide additional space. These homes feel odd to visitors--they don't have any hallways! Just one room after another.

At times, an ambitious family might work together to build an entirely new home. This process was a significant part of my childhood. Together, we picked a spot across the road from my grandparents' home and began the process of making adobes. This involved--very simply--digging a hole in the ground about 200 feet from the chosen site for the new home. To the clay soil, we added sand, straw, and water. We mixed the adobe mud, pressed it into wooden frames, and left the wet bricks to dry in the sun. Each weeknight evening when my father returned home, we would gather to make another batch of adobes. On a productive summer evening, we could make nearly 300 bricks. Everyone took part in this activity--from my 2-year-old sister (who mostly played in the mud and water) to my grandfather (who worked fairly steadily). At times, frivolity would strike, and rather than make adobes, we would all engage in mud-slinging, mud-and-water fights.

This home-building activity was important in many ways. We worked together, side by side, from the youngest to the oldest. Everyone had a role; everyone contributed to the process; everyone was significant. In addition to this valuing of the individual parts of the extended family, we were learning important skills and developing important dispositions.

It would not be fair to tell this story without noting that a project of this magnitude can create stress and angry feelings among individuals. There were times I would have preferred to read a novel or watch television, and I was not allowed to do so. To some it may be construed as dictatorial child labor. The lessons learned, however, about group membership and support are significant to cultural groups--they ensure their survival.

The key factor in this building activity is the togetherness aspect of the work. It doesn't take a community to build a house; it can be built by a contractor. But building a home as a family, extended family, or community has the potential to strengthen bonds as participants learn to support and depend on each other.

The Families Book: True Stories about Real Kids and the People They Live With and Love (Erlbach, 1996) includes a chapter written by a farm family. On a farm, families often work together and share responsibilities. Twelve-year-old Sean writes of the joy he feels helping plant vegetables and herbs and selling them to local restaurants. Fourteen year-old D.C. writes about their other business--raising collie dogs. He talks of caring for newborn puppies, and how it can be emotionally difficult to sell them after caring and growing attached to them. However, over time, this commitment to working together as a family and community develops more effective relationships and builds stronger communities.

Similar activities take place in families and communities across the United States. Perhaps they are not of the same magnitude, but magnitude is not the key factor. For example, many neighborhoods organize annual street potlucks, in which they close both ends of their street for an evening of festivity. The families come together in the street to share food, games, and friendship. They learn about each other and form bonds that support them in times of need or times of joy.

These types of activities can also be incorporated to build cohesiveness in a school environment. Building a new playground allows each person to play a significant role. Children can participate in assisting with the playground's design, while parents, children, teachers, and community members can come together on specific "work days" to construct the site. This activity worked so well for a school in New Hampshire that several years later they expanded their playground so that new families in the school would feel that same sense of cohesiveness.

Other examples can be seen in the traditional activities families take part in at holidays or other celebrations specific to their home culture. At family gatherings, stories from times spent together are told and retold. These stories join with the activity to serve as an element that holds the family together. Wolff (1993) notes that family stories promote family awareness, intergenerational sharing, an understanding of family and self, and an appreciation for the uniqueness of the family. Stories link past, current, and future generations together, shaping and building the family's heritage.

Perhaps in recognition of the importance of building community, the Institute for the Study of Civil Values set out to help neighborhoods develop plans to improve the neighborhood. The program, called the Social Contract Project, has successfully implemented several projects in Pennsylvania. In Queen Village, a South Philadelphia neighborhood, the Queen Village Social Contract called for a new plan to establish a partnership with local schools, provide a summer-day-camp for kids, and implement an adult literacy program. Each goal was achieved, and groups in the neighborhood have been working together since.

For more information on neighborhood and community development, visit these Web sites:

The Social Contract Project, on the Web site for the Institute for the Study of Civic Values. URL: http://libertynet.org/~edcivic/sochome.html

Organizing for Neighborhood Development: A Handbook for Citizen Groups.
URL: http://tenant.net/Organize/orgdev.html

A List of Community Development Stories, maintained by Business Growth Partners, Inc.
URL: http://www.bicgrow.com/bgp/cd/category.html

Sources:

Erlbach, A. (1996). *The families book: True stories about real kids and the people they live with and love.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Wolff, L. O. (1993, November). *Family narrative: How our stories shape us.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter Eight: "Characters We Love and Hate: Learning about Ourselves through People We Meet on TV" (see previous issues for chapters 1-7).

Parents are a child's first model for developing a sense of identity. The process of identification and search for self begins in early childhood, continues through adolescence, and, as some psychologists believe, lasts throughout one's life. Erik Erickson, a prominent psychologist, suggests that most children go through two stages of identification: (1) during the preschool years (4- to 6-years-old), where identifying with parents of the same sex and learning appropriate behaviors for males and females in society is the primary task; and (2) during adolescence, where young people reaffirm their sexual identities as well as begin to form mature sexual relationships and think about questions relating to ideologies, ethics, and occupational choices.

As children grow older and enter school, teachers and even parents of other children offer them new models for identification. In addition, television, books, and magazines suggest different occupational models for children. In order to finally achieve a sense of self, children must be aware of their own physical makeup, their strong points as well as their inadequacies, and they must develop a feeling of consistency in lifestyle, which includes their particular way of growing, thinking, dressing, acting, and achieving.

So, how does television play a role in helping children develop a sense of identity? TV characters and celebrities influence clothing choices, the way we talk, our hobbies and interests, the way we decorate our homes, and even the way we behave. Children are especially likely to imitate the clothes, hair styles, and behaviors of the TV characters that they admire. This may include using expressions from their favorite TV programs or pretending to be a favorite superhero.

While children usually find it easy to talk about which characters they like and dislike on television, they may have more difficulty expressing *why* they feel the way they do. This lesson provides parents with an excellent opportunity to learn more about their children's feelings, to help their children understand their own feelings, and for parents and children to discuss their values together.

What You Need To Know

First, you should remind your children that most actors pretend to be different characters on television.

Remind them that producers, directors, writers, and actors create these characters.

Next, help your children think about why people like certain TV characters. You may remind them that we often like characters who are somewhat like us, or who enjoy what we enjoy.

Have you ever wondered why your children like superheros? Because children are relatively small and weak, with very little control over their environment, they enjoy watching characters who are powerful. One of the most consistent research findings is that boys' and girls' play themes involved characters from television--generally superheros like Batman and Wonder Woman. It has also been found that both boys and girls had imaginary playmates based on television characters—again superheros.

It is important to understand how children learn and respond to role models. According to researchers Craig Edelbrock and Alan Sugawara, female preschoolers have clearer expectations for adult feminine behavior than males have for adult male behavior. They found that boys were more likely to prefer programs portraying males in play, and not adult, activities.

In addition to serving as role models, characters on detective programs or even situation comedies may provide children with an outlet for their anger and frustrations. For example, children may identify with characters who express anger openly. They can do this by copying their style of walking, talking, and even their aggressive behaviors. If the characters are presented as powerful and competent, and receive rewards for their behavior, children may try to imitate them.

You may want to help your child compare the negative and positive traits of television characters. Many young children (grades kindergarten through 4) do not understand what "personality traits" are. They may find it easier to talk about what characters do rather than what kind of people they are. The traits they tend to discuss are: strength, attractiveness, popularity, and humor. You may want to encourage children in this age group to think of other traits such as empathy, kindness, and helpfulness.

Children in the middle grades (5 to 8) may also focus on a character's more superficial traits at first, but they can be encouraged easily to make more sophisticated judgments. You may also encourage them to discuss more subtle positive traits such as altruism, affection, industriousness, and loyalty; and negative traits such as greed, vengefulness, and shallowness.

Encourage your child to think about the way characters behave in different situations. Children often like the predictability of characters (they enjoy knowing how a character will act in certain situations). Because of this, children may enjoy watching a weekly program because they feel that they know the characters personally.

As a parent, you should be aware of your child's favorite characters. Have you heard your child discuss TV characters with friends? Friends' opinions often influence children's attitudes. Also, children may like a TV character who is funny, but you can point out that the character has other admirable traits. When children see detective characters on TV, these characters may appear admirable even though they sometimes kill people. You should make sure that your child understands that these characters are not admirable *because* they kill people. With these and other TV characters, children should understand that characters can be both good and bad.

By talking about TV characters, children learn about other people and themselves. People can help children understand why they like characters and how these feelings influence their own needs and goals.

Discussion Ideas

Ask your children who their favorite TV characters are, and why. Children may want to make a list of TV characters and put stars next to the characters they like. Next, they can underline the characters that have some traits that are similar to their own. The following questions may be helpful:

In what ways are they like you?
In what ways are they different from you?
Is it fun to watch TV characters that are like you?
Do you think any of these characters could be called good or bad?
Is it possible for a character to be both good and bad?

Parents should make sure that their children name traits other than superficial characteristics such as strength, beauty, popularity, or humor.

Discussions can precede or follow the viewing of a favorite program.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

Healthy Eating Habits for Toddlers and Teens

by Anne S. Robertson

Parents often worry that their children aren't eating properly. While some parents are concerned that their child may not be getting enough nutrition, others worry that their child is eating too much, has a diet that is too fatty, or has a diet that is heavy in artificial additives or ingredients. Parents who have a child with food allergies may need to show even more attention to providing "safe" foods with the same vitamins or minerals as a substitute for the food that may cause the allergic reaction. In the United States, poor nutrition may be the result of one or more of several factors, including poverty, poor eating habits, or a lack of knowledge about a child's nutritional needs at various stages of development.

Teaching your children to eat a moderate amount from the five major food groups is important. Examples from those food groups include (Schor, 1995, p. 74):

Vegetables: 3-5 servings per day (e.g., 1/2 cup of raw or cooked = 1 serving)
Fruits: 2-4 servings per day (e.g., 1/2 cup of sliced fruit or 1 medium fruit = 1 serving)
Bread, cereal, or pastas: 6-11 servings per day (e.g., 1 slice of bread or 1/2 cup of rice)
Protein: 2-3 servings (e.g., 2-3 ounces of meat, 1/2 cup of beans, or 1 egg)
Dairy: 2-3 servings (e.g., 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or 1-1/2 ounces of cheese)

Several difficult stages for parents to address their child's eating habits include the baby-into-toddler years and the teen years. These developmental stages are similar in several respects, including rapid growth in height, weight, and brain development. During their first year, babies may gain between 1-1/2 to 2 pounds per month, and their head size will increase in diameter by 1/2 inch per month, on average. Between the ages of 2 and 3, a toddler's rate of growth declines when compared to the first year, but nevertheless, height and weight steadily increase (Shelov, 1994, pp. 106 and 250). Children between the ages of 10 and 18 years may double in body weight largely due to their rapid growth in height. (Fenwick & Smith, 1996, p. 17). Boys tend to "bulk up" with muscle, and girls with both muscle and fat as they develop their more rounded female shape.

Another reason that parents may find babies, toddlers, and teenagers more difficult to encourage to eat well is that communication may be difficult during these developmental stages. A baby must gain the majority of his or her nutrients from breast-milk or formula, and it takes time for parents to understand what their baby needs when he or she cries. Newborns may nod off after a few gulps of mother's milk or a bottle, only to awaken again in 15 minutes hungrier than ever. Toddlers and teens present a different complication with communication. They are typically finding new ways to challenge parents or authority figures in their lives. Mealtime can easily become a battleground, and healthy eating may suffer in a power struggle between children and their parents during these years.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and other specialists urge parents to try to develop healthy eating habits and mealtime routines early in their child's life, including being consistent with breakfast, lunch, supper, and two healthy snacks. According to several studies, children who eat a good breakfast show higher performance on school tests and related performance (Pollitt, Liebel, & Greenfield, 1991). Also, research shows a positive correlation between families that eat supper together and family and adolescent stability. Clearly, mealtime routines have a broader impact than simply providing the nutrition for healthy physical growth.

As your child matures and moves into these challenging years, it is important to try and not make an issue out of eating during family meals or to engage in a power struggle. For example, if children are bypassing the traditional cereal or pancakes, you might want to try out some creative ways to incorporate breakfast such as serving "breakfast cookies," which are healthy, homemade bars disguised as cookies in order to entice picky toddlers or teens (Jewell & Jewell, 1989). Including children in meal planning, grocery shopping, and meal preparation may encourage children with finicky appetites to take a greater interest in healthy meals. Meal planning and preparation can help children learn important skills in reading and following directions and can pique children's interest if occasionally they choose their favorite foods. They will also learn that other people in the family may have different tastes and that they need to be flexible and try new foods. Other ideas for encouraging family meals are:

- serving a menu from another country as part of a weekly or monthly theme night,
- creating an atmosphere during the evening meal with flowers or candles,
- turning the television off during family meals as it detracts from family conversation,
- making a picnic supper, even if it is served on a blanket on the floor of the living room instead of at a park,
- developing a traditional meal for your family such as clam chowder on Fridays,
- limiting the amount of criticism or correction that happens during mealtime while working to model interesting discussions and ways to support family members,
- letting the teenager in the family be completely responsible for the meal preparation for the entire family at least one night per week.

Providing your children with many healthy snack alternatives will encourage them to make healthy snack choices as they mature. One approach is to assist your child with thinking about and verbalizing how they really feel. Sometimes just saying that you are hungry isn't enough. For example, are you hungry for something crunchy or smooth? Or perhaps you are really thirsty! Some good snack options might be (Schor, 1995, p. 85):

- **Thirsty**: cold milk or juice, or ice-water with lemon
- **Smooth**: yogurt, cottage cheese, banana, custard
- **Crunchy**: raw vegetables, apples, popcorn, rice cakes
- **Juicy**: oranges, grapes, frozen juice pops, juice
- **Really hungry**: hard-boiled eggs, granola, peanut butter on crackers, cheese
- **Fun**: frozen grapes, banana slices, fruit, or frozen peas.

Of course, there are those times when your child may tell you that he or she is hungry when in fact the problem is really fatigue, unhappiness, boredom, or the need for attention. Helping children identify how they really feel and finding appropriate nonfood solutions may help them better understand healthy eating habits. The long-term health benefits are many, as your child grows out of these stages and into a healthy young adult.

For more information on food and nutrition for families see:

Adventures in learning with the food guide pyramid. (ND). Association for Child Development, P.O. Box 1491, East Lansing, MI 48826; telephone: 800-234-3287.

40 Developmental Assets. (1996, Autumn). *Assets, 1*(1), 11.

National Health Education Consortium. (1994, June). *Children's nutrition and learning*. ERIC Digest. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ED 369 579).

Nutrition a la Carte. Association for Child Development, P.O. Box 1491, East Lansing, MI 48826; telephone: 800-234-3287

In What's new on NPIN for March,

Why do we need vitamin A?
Why do we need vitamin C?
Why do we need the B vitamins?
Why do we need Iron?

Web sites:

Food and Nutrition Information Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
URL: http://www.nalusda.gov/fnic/

Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Healthy Nutrition Information.
URL: http://family.hanpshire.edu/swicbro.html

This site provides an example of a federally funded program that provides free food and nutrition information to qualified pregnant women and children. For information on programs and qualifying information in your area, contact your state or county department of health and human services.

Sources:

Fenwick, E., & Smith, T. (1996). *Adolescence: The survival guide for parents and teenagers*. New York: DK Publishing, Inc.

Jewell, D., & Jewell, C. T. (1989). *The oat and wheat bran health plan*. New York: Bantam Books.

Pollitt, E., Liebel, R., & Greenfield, D. (1991). Brief fasting, stress, and cognition in children. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 34*(August), 1526-1533.

Schor, Edward. (1995). *Caring for your school-age child: Ages 5-12*. New York: Bantam Books.

Shelov, S. P. (Ed.). (1994). *The American Academy of Pediatrics: Caring for your baby and young child, birth to age 5. The complete and authoritative guide*. New York: Bantam Books.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

Getting Your Preschoolers To Clean Their Rooms

So, you've worked all day and now there's laundry to do and dinner to make, but what about your children's bedrooms? Often this is the last thing on the list, if it's there at all. However, it is important to keep in mind that your children can help out and clean their own rooms. While it is best to start early in life, it's not too late to make changes now.

The key piece of information is to make the chores "kid-friendly." That is, don't set your child up for failure by setting your expectations too high. If you have realistic demands and arrange the room so that your children knows what goes where, you can expect more than 50% of the work to get done.

Helpful Hints for Setting Realistic Expectations

1. *Beds*. Don't ask your child to flatten sheets, make hospital corners, and fluff up pillows. Instead, set each bed up with a comforter or even put a sleeping bag on it.
2. *Laundry*. Put a hamper in the corner of the room or in the closet. Or use a man's old shirt fixed on a hanger. Button and sew a seam at the bottom and use the neck of the shirt to put dirty clothes in. When it's full, carry the hanger to the wash.
3. *Toys*. Have several shelves in your child's room. This allows children to only take out what they want instead of a toy box that they must empty to reach the bottom. If you want toys in specific places, tape pictures to the shelf.
4. *Puzzles & Games*. Mark all of the pieces that go together by marking the back with the same color. If the boxes are torn, use empty wet wipes boxes to store the pieces (uses less space, too).
5. *Books*. Use the shelves for books too. You can use covered boxes as separators so that you can divide them by themes, magazines, or age groups.
6. *Cars/Figures*. Store these toys in a clean plastic milk gallon that has a hole cut in it on the opposite side of the handle. Preschoolers will be able to carry this around.
7. *Blocks*. Use an old skirt with belt loops to store blocks. Stitch together the bottom and use fabric paints to decorate. Use the belt loops to tie together and hang the bag (skirt).

Source:

Seven ways to get your preschoolers to clean their rooms. (1996, September). *Indy's Child*, p. 38.

Prepared for Parent News by Dawn Ramsburg

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

National Survey of Fathers and Families Programs

Conducted by the National Center on Fathers and Families, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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The National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF) needs your help to compile the most comprehensive listing of programs in the United States. If you run a program that focuses in any way on fathers and families, please contact the center:

Telephone: 215-573-5500
Fax: 215-573-5508
Email: mailbox@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu

The mission of the National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF) is to improve the life chances of children and the efficacy of families and to support the conduct and dissemination of research that advances the understanding of father involvement. Developed in the spirit of the Philadelphia Children's Network's (PCN) motto, "Help the children--Fix the system," NCOFF seeks to increase and enrich the possibilities for children, ensuring that children are helped and that the system allows for the participation of fathers in their children's lives. NCOFF shares with PCN the premises that children need loving, nurturing families; that families need to be supported in providing nurturance; and that family support efforts should increase the ability of both parents and other adults within and outside the biological family to contribute to the child's development.

NCOFF was established in July 1994 with core funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to develop and implement a research agenda that is practice-focused and practice-derived, to expand the knowledge base on father involvement and families within multiple disciplines, and to contribute to critical discourses in policy. NCOFF's vision is to build the field, bringing together stakeholders in efforts for fathers and families alongside communities of individuals most affected by and committed to the work. NCOFF works with a variety of collaborating institutions, including the National Practitioners Network and the Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy.

NCOFF's research plan is developed around seven Core Learnings, distilled from PCN's experiences and confirmed as being consistent with the experiences of other programs and agencies serving fathers. These Core Learnings are:

1. Fathers care even if that caring is not always shown in conventional ways.
2. Father presence matters-in terms of economic well-being, social support, and child development.
3. Joblessness is a major impediment to family formation and father involvement.
4. Existing approaches to public benefits, child support enforcement, and paternity establishment operate to create obstacles and disincentives to father involvement. The disincentives are sufficiently

compelling as to have prompted the emergence of a phenomenon dubbed "underground fathers"-men who acknowledge paternity and are involved in the lives of their children but who refuse to participate as fathers in the formal systems.

5. A growing number of young fathers and mothers need additional support to develop the vital skills to share the responsibility for parenting.
6. The transition from biological father to committed parent has significant developmental implications for young fathers.
7. The behaviors of young parents, both fathers and mothers, are influenced significantly by intergenerational beliefs and practices within families of origin.

The Core Learnings provide the context for the development of the NCOFF Research Database, the Center's primary vehicle for collecting and collating research data for the field. The Database consists of seven libraries, or volumes, each of which develops a different Core Learning. Each library includes citation lists, annotated bibliographies, and abstracts of articles, reports, and book volumes that focus on issues implied in the focal Core Learning. NCOFF currently has available 18 documents written for a broad audience of individuals and organizations interested in issues related to fathers and families. These include the libraries of the Research Database; critical literature reviews, written and reviewed by scholars representing different disciplines and interests in fathers and families; several working papers and monographs; and recent book lists and book reviews. *Policy Perspectives*, a periodically published report on policy issues, will be disseminated in early spring of 1996.

The work of NCOFF will contribute to the broad cross-disciplinary research base on children, mothers, and families and the emerging knowledge base on father development, father-child attachment, and father involvement. NCOFF aims to advance the knowledge base by identifying critical, cross-cutting issues emerging from practice and research; encouraging collaboration in the development of studies and methodological approaches; and providing critical analyses of the impact of policies on the real lives of fathers and families and implications for their educational, emotional, and social development.

For more information, contact:

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Program support is provided by the Ford Foundation.

Other resources:

The National Center on Fathers and Families is pleased to announce the availability of a series of publications aimed at those committed to improving the lives of children and families.

Databases: Abstracts, Annotations, and Citations
- DB-FC-96-01 Fathers Care
- DB-FP-96-02 Father Presence Matters
- DB-JE-96-03 Joblessness @ Unemployment
- DB-SB-96-04 Systemic Barriers

DB-CP-96-05 Co-Parenting
DB-RT-96-06 Role Transitions
DB-EL-96-07 Intergenerational Learning

Literature Reviews:

- LR-FC-96-01 Fathers Care, by James Davis and Eric Perkins
- LR-FP-96-02 Fathers Presence Matters, by Deborah J. Johnson
- LR-JE-96-03 Joblessness and Unemployment, by Patrick L. Mason
- LR-SB-96-04 Systemic Barriers, by Elaine Sorenson and Mark Turner
- LR-CP-96-05 Co-Parenting or Shared Parenting, by Terry Arendell
- LR-RT-96-06 Role Transitions, by Will 1. Jordan
- LR-EL-96-07 Intergenerational Learning, by Vivian L. Gadsden and Marcia Hall

Working Papers:

- WP-95-01 Recent Works on Fathers and Families, by Keisha Armorer and Danielle Kane
- WP-95-02 The Absence of Father: Effects on Children's Development and Family Functioning, by Vivian L. Gadsden
- WP-95-03 Transitions in the Life Course of African American Males, edited by Vivian L. Gadsden and William Trent
- WP-95-04 Shared Commitment: Issues from the Inaugural Meeting of the National Practitioners Network, by Vivian L. Gadsden, Keisha Armorer, and Danielle Kane

All publications are available at cost and must be prepaid through a check or purchase order, payable to "Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania." Current price information may be obtained by calling 215-573-5500. To order a document, please contact: National Center on Fathers and Families, Attention: Dissemination Office, Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut St., Box 58, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

The Controversy over Bilingual Education

by Debbie Reese

There is a widespread belief among the general public that Hispanic children are at risk of failing in our educational system because of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Among the initiatives put forward to address the needs of Hispanic children are bilingual education programs. These programs have been controversial, as passionate advocates and opponents on both sides of the issue respond to bilingual education initiatives. What does the research say on this issue?

In the early 1900s, bilingualism, or being raised in a bilingual home, was seen as a detriment to school success. As a result, children were discouraged from learning or speaking their native tongue at school. In the last 20 years, however, research has suggested that bilingualism may serve as "a linguistic enrichment with possible cognitive advantages" (Garcia, 1993, p. 375). Bilingual-bicultural programs have been developed to sustain and even enhance children's bilingual capabilities in schools. Most bilingual-bicultural programs in the United States are based on the premise that using the child's home language in school will result in greater academic success for the child. Opponents have argued that other educational strategies, such as direct instruction, tutoring, and cooperative learning, may be more effective than bilingual-bicultural programs.

In one nationwide survey of families, it was learned that family dynamics are seriously disrupted when young children lose their home language. Families surveyed responded that children become estranged from their families and cultural heritage as they lose the ability to communicate with grandparents and community members who are not fluent in English. The study revealed that parents recognize the importance of English and want their children to learn it at school. However, parents do not want this learning to be *at the expense* of losing their children's home language (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Other support for this position can be found in research by Edwards, Fear, and Gallego (1990), which found that parents of African-American and Hispanic children want the educational system to reflect their families' values and ways of life.

But other research studies indicate wide divergence on this controversial issue. The Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO) recently released a report titled "The Importance of Learning English," which includes results of a survey conducted among 600 Hispanic parents of school-age children. The report states that 63% of Hispanic parents prefer that their children be taught English as soon as possible, and that 81.3% want their children to be taught academic subjects in English. Based on results of the CEO survey, critics of bilingual education suggest that the wishes of Hispanic parents are not being served by bilingual education programs. Linda Chavez, president of CEO, says that English-immersion programs will better serve students than current bilingual programs (Lightfoot-Clark, 1996).

The controversy around bilingual education continues. Further research will be necessary to determine which strategies are most effective in helping children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds succeed in school. Hopefully, this research will be used to inform the debate on how best to spend limited funds at the state and federal levels for children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

For further information on the topic of bilingual education, visit these Web sites:

Center for Equal Opportunity. URL: http://www.ceousa.org/
National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education. URL: http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/

Sources:

Edwards, P. A., Fear, K. L., & Gallego, M. A. (1995). Role of parents in responding to issues of linguistic and cultural diversity. In E. E. Garcia, B. McLaughlin, B. Spodek, & O. N. Saracho (Eds.), *Meeting the challenge of linguistic and cultural diversity in early childhood education* (pp. 141-153). New York: Teachers College Press.

Garcia, E. E. (1993). The education of linguistically and culturally diverse children. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 372-384). New York: Macmillan.

Lightfoot-Clark, R. (1996). Poll of Hispanics touts importance of learning English. *Education Daily*, p. 4.

Wong-Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 6*(3), 323-347.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

The Education of Down Syndrome Children

by Debbie Reese

Down Syndrome is a birth defect that occurs in approximately one of every 800 babies. The defect is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome, which results in physical abnormalities. The more serious abnormality, however, is mental retardation. Most children with Down Syndrome develop more slowly than the average child, but this development can vary from a delay that is mild to one that is severe (Shelov, 1994).

Parents often do not have the skills necessary to engage a Down Syndrome child in ways that stimulate development (Sanz & Menendez, 1996). Physicians usually recommend that parents take advantage of early intervention programs that apply specially designed therapies to help the child make the most of his or her abilities (Shelov, 1994). Research studies demonstrate that parents who develop intervention techniques are able to see positive results of their intervention, and that these results encourage the parent to continue working with the child. Further research (Sanz & Mendendez, 1993) has indicated that better results can be obtained if the child receives social reinforcement coupled with interaction (such as grasping the child's hands and clapping them). Sanz and Menendez (1996) report that early intervention results in higher functioning, and that the greatest results are achieved when Down Syndrome children begin receiving intervention soon after birth.

As the child grows older and enters preschool or elementary school, the child can benefit from inclusion, which means placing the child in a regular education classroom. Inclusion differs from mainstreaming in that the child is *part* of the regular classroom and not simply a *visitor*. A Down Syndrome child's curricular goals and needs may differ from those of the average child, but these needs can be met through a carefully implemented plan.

In a recent survey of teachers conducted by the National Down Syndrome Society, 92% of 120 regular classroom teachers rated their experience of having a Down Syndrome child in their classroom as excellent. Teachers reported that the most common modifications they made to accommodate the needs of the Down Syndrome child were individual and small group instruction, and that it was not necessary to modify their classroom behavior modification strategies. Nearly all the teachers (91%) indicated they need more training and preparation before working with a Down Syndrome child (Sack, 1996).

Parents are required to participate in the preparation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that provides detailed information on the educational program and includes short- and long-term goals. School staff need to reach out to parents who may be uncertain about how their input can be incorporated. Inclusion is not easy, but it can result in significant benefits to the Down Syndrome child as well as the other students in the class. In order for the child to experience success, parents, teachers, and administrators must work together.

For further information:

The National Down Syndrome Society maintains a Web site with a wealth of information on Down Syndrome. Among the information on the site are book reviews for parents, concise articles that discuss many aspects of Down Syndrome, and links to other sites. (URL: http://www.ndss.org/)

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
666 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10012-2317
Telephone: 212-460-9330

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education maintains a Web site with full-text articles on a wide range of topics related to disabilities and gifted education. One article focuses on Down Syndrome.

URL: gopher://ericir.syr.edu:70/00/Clearinghouses/16houses/ERIC_EC/Other_Disabilities/Digest457

A second article on their site, *Including Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms*, can be found at:

gopher://ericir.syr.edu:70/00/Clearinghouses/16houses/ERIC_EC/Instruction_Management/Digest521

Sources:

Sack, J. (1996, November 18). Down syndrome survey shows success in inclusion. *Education Daily, 29*, p. 4.

Sanz, M. T., & Mendendez, J. (1996). A study of the effect of age on onset of treatment on the observed development of Down's Syndrome babies. *Early Child Development and Care, 118*, 93-101.

Sanz, M. T., & Mendendez, J. (1993). Early acquisitions of trisomic-21 and social reinforcement. *Early Child Development and Care, 91*, 17-23.

Shelov, S. P. (Ed.). (1994). *The American Academy of Pediatrics: Caring for your baby and young child, birth to age 5. The complete and authoritative guide.* New York: Bantam Books.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

Parenting in an Online World

The Children's Partnership, with the National PTA and the National Urban League, has written a new guide that seeks to provide parents with the information and understanding necessary to help children in the information age.

The Parent's Guide to the Information Superhighway provides a step-by-step introduction to parenting in an online world, as well as rules and tools to help children and families at home, at school, and in the community. The guide also has a glossary of terms, information about online services, a guide to equipment needed, and ideas for alternatives to the purchase of a home computer.

This guide will be available through libraries, local PTAs, and Urban League offices.

It can also be downloaded at: http://www.childrenspartnership.org/parentguide/parguide.html

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

Why Should You Read to Infants

Many parents, even those who love to read themselves, wonder why they should read to infants, much in the same way that new parents will ask why they should talk to a newborn who can't talk back. However, just as talking to a small baby introduces language, research suggests that infants and children who are read to are more enthusiastic about reading, are more successful in school, are better readers, and are more likely to remain life-long readers.

But how do you read to a baby? Some suggestions include:

- Read with lots of inflection, as babies like to hear the rhythm and sound of your voice (lullabies and nursery rhymes are ideal for sound and rhythm).
- Read books with big bright pictures and simple concepts (one picture per page) or books with textured pictures so that the baby can feel the story as you read.
- Talk about the pictures instead of reading a complex story.
- Help your baby point to pictures as you describe the story to him so that reading is interactive. Soon your child will be able to tell you parts of the story.
- Be responsive to cues from your child. Your child may not want you to read a particular story, or at a particular time. You can try a different book (something shorter or more colorful), or try a different time. Be sure not to insist on reading if the baby wants to do something else. Just try again later!
- Try to read at the same time every night, but remember that you can read anytime (while you're nursing or waiting at the doctor's office).
- Try recording books onto audiotapes for car trips.

Source:

Cuddle your baby with a book. (1996, September). *Indy's Child*, p. 16.

Prepared for Parent News by Dawn Ramsburg

Continue to the next article.

Parent News for March 1997

Of Interest

Principals On Call for Kids: National Principals' Hotline (telephone: 800-944-1601)

Get advice from School Principals and Psychologists in April.

Get answers to your questions about schools, children, and education by calling the National Principals' Hotline this April. For the eighth year running, 150 principals from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) will operate a toll-free hotline service to promote family involvement in schools. Parents who are curious, troubled, or simply need some reassurance regarding their child's education may speak confidentially with a principal during the days and hours below.

School psychologists from the National Association of School psychologists will be available at the same number to help answer questions and offer callers specialized advice.

The hotline will operate in English and Spanish. Call toll-free in English to 800-944-1601 or 800-753-5090 for Spanish during the following days and times in your area:

	Sun. April 13	Mon. April 14	Tues. April 15
Eastern	1pm - 9pm	9am - 9pm	9am - 1pm
Central	12noon-8pm	8am - 8pm	8am -12noon
Mountain	11am - 7pm	7am- 7pm	7am - 11am
Pacific	10am - 6pm	6am - 6pm	6am - 10am

Cosponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (TIAA), and *Family Circle* magazine, the hotline averages over 1,000 calls each year from parents, grandparents, teachers, and students in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, or Canada. Topics of calls range from preschool to high school, discipline policies, tests, learning difficulties, to giving advice to teachers, and easing difficulties between schools and families.

The 1997 hotline originates from the San Antonio, Texas, convention center where approximately 6,000 K-8 principals will attend NAESP's annual meeting. Volunteers work in two-hour shifts on a dozen phone lines.

Callers may request a free copy of "On Call for Kids," a booklet produced by NAESP and TIAA, that gives answers to questions most asked by parents during previous hotlines.

Established in 1921, the National Association of Elementary School Principals services 26,000 K-8 educators in the United States, Canada, and overseas.

For more information, contact:

National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1615 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314-3483;
telephone: 703-684-3345

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

Parenting Skills: Bringing Out the Best in Your Child

Published by the American Association of School Administrators, this guide provides a general overview of parenting goals from birth through high school graduation. Brief topics include safety, emerging literacy, discipline methods, reading, temper tantrums, responsibility, school success, and problem solving.

American Association of School Administrators
1801 North More St.
Arlington, VA 22209

How To Develop a Family Mission Statement
by Steven R. Covey

Presented on two audiocassettes with a small manual, this resource is designed to help families focus on the bonds that bind their family together around a common sense of purpose and mission. It advises on ways to eliminate ineffective family habits, develop self-discipline in children, and build a nurturing environment in the home. Stephen R. Covey, the author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,* builds on his experience as a father and grandfather for this publication. ($17.95)

Covey Leadership Center
3507 North University Ave., Suite 100
Provo, UT 84604-4479
Telephone: 800-304-9788

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families
by Stephen R. Covey

Presented on four audiocassettes, with a small manual, this series expands on Mr. Covey's work with developing a family mission statement and his leadership experience with businesses. Topics discussed include creating the framework for a beautiful family culture, using principles for the foundation of effective families, creating a climate of trust and love as well as nurturing seven habits in yourself and your children. ($29.95)

Covey Leadership Center

3507 North University Ave., Suite 100
Provo, UT 84604-4479
Telephone: 800-304-9788

Nutrition a la Carte

Developed by the Association for Child Development, this cookbook is neatly contained in a 3-ring binder. New inserts are sent every 4 months and include family-friendly recipes and meal-planning ideas. Food facts and nutrition analyses are included with each recipe. Recipes cover the major food groups as well as menu planning and ingredient substitutions. ($15)

Association for Child Development
P.O. Box 1491
East Lansing, MI 48826
Telephone: 800-234-3287

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. **Webber, Ruth. (1996). *Split Ends: Teenage Stepchildren*, The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd., 19 Prospect Hill Rd., Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria 3124, Australia**

   This 82-page book, written for teenagers, discusses the many aspects of being in a stepfamily. Sections include divided loyalties, where children may live, feelings of jealousy and remember the past, how to relate to the stepparent, gaining freedom, and frustrations. The author stresses that healthy families are not luck--it takes time to work together and find new ways of relating that feel comfortable. PS 024 099

2. ***Adventures in Learning with the Food Guide Pyramid.* (1995). Association for Child Development, P.O. Box 1491, East Lansing, MI 48826; telephone: 800-234-3287. ($15)**

   Produced by the Association for Child Development, this tool is designed to assist in promoting nutritious eating habits for children. The food pyramid is explained as well has portions of food that are required for healthy development. Activities, including songs and poems and food-related crafts, are interspersed with child-friendly recipes and vitamin information.

3. ***UNICEF Annual Report, 1996*. United Nations Children's Fund, New York, NY.**

   At this time, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) is commemorating its 50th anniversary, under the slogan "children first." This annual UNICEF report reviews the organization's activities during 1995. An introduction by the executive director states that the report will give readers a sense of what UNICEF is doing, with partners, to rise to the program's challenges. Topics in the report include: (1) the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child--a powerful and wide-ranging legal instrument to promote and protect the human rights of children; (2) regional developments; (3) emergency countries (those suffering recent natural disasters or war); (4) child protection; (5) health; (6) nutrition; (7) safe environment; (8) urban issues; (9) basic education; (10) girls and women; (11) communication; (12) working together (national committees, non-governmental organization, and inter-agency cooperation; (13) resources and management; (14) UNICEF income, donors, and expenditures (tables and charts); and 15 profiles of individual efforts to improve conditions for children. Descriptions are given for regional developments in West and Central Africa, the Middle East and North Africa; East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union), and the Baltic states. The report concludes with an annex describing major decisions made by UNICEF's executive board during 1995. PS 024 528

4. ***UNICEF Annual Report, 1995*. United Nations Children's Fund, New York, NY.**

This annual report for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) details the programs and services provided by this organization in 1994. Following an overview of the year and a remembrance of former UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant, the report describes developments in seven world regions and in specific emergency countries. The report next describes the current status of efforts to improve children's rights. It then describes specific projects in the areas of: (1) child health; (2) nutrition; (3) water and environmental sanitation; (4) sustainable human development; (5) basic education; and (6) women and girls. Communication projects and publications intended for advocacy are also described. Additional sections list national committees, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations working with UNICEF; resources; and maps, tables, and charts of UNICEF staff and finances. Throughout the report are individual profiles of various aspects of UNICEF work, such as modest progress for girls, communities mobilizing against AIDS, and funding for Rwanda emergency. PS 025 015

5. **Kovac-Cerovic, Tunde. (1996). How Can We as Parents and Educators Foster Metacognitive Development? In *Childhood Education: International Perspectives*; Oulu University (Finland), Early Education Center; Finland Association for Childhood Education International**

   This Yugoslavian study aimed to describe the ways in which mothers are (or are not) using the opportunity created by interacting with their children on tasks that are in the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to foster the child's metacognitive development. The underlying assumption of this study on metacognition is derived from the Vygotskian conception of development. The mechanism of metacognitive development is seen as internalization, proceeding from other-regulation or joint regulation to self-regulation. It occurs in adult-child interactions in the Zone of Proximal Development, in the course of which the adult is expected to gradually hand over metacognitive control to the child. Subjects for the study were 42 children, ages 7 and 8 years, and their mothers. Metacognitive development was assessed through several methods, including a meta-memory interview (MMI), a guessing game, a forbidden colors game, and a text underlining task (children completed these games and tasks independently and with their mothers). Complex correlations between variables related to metacognitive development and to mother-child interaction revealed that mother-child interaction had affected the children's metacognitive development by age 7 or 8, and that features of the interaction that have the greatest impact on development can be clearly encompassed in the Vygotskian framework. Results also showed, however, that metacognitive regulation (especially planning and checking) was not made transparent for the child by the mother, leading to the conclusion that development of independent thinking is not stressed, possibly because of authoritarian cultural attitudes. (Concludes with a description of a proposed intervention program for metacognitive development. Contains 33 references.) PS 024 976

Publications identified with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Vanished Children's Alliance

The Vanished Children's Alliance (VCA) is a private, not-for-profit organization that is one of the nation's oldest and most experienced missing children's organizations. VCA provides educational classes and workshops to professionals, parents, families, and community organizations in the following areas: abduction prevention, case management, search and recovery, and family reunification. All services to victim families and their children are provided at no cost to the family.

Contact:

Vanished Children's Alliance
2095 Park Ave.
San Jose, CA 95126
Telephone: 408-296-1113
Fax: 408-296-1117

National Coalition of Education Activists

The National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA) is a private, not-for-profit multiracial organization of parents, school staff, union and community activists, and child advocates interested in the implementation of progressive school reforms. NCEA provides materials, speakers, training, descriptions of model programs and other resources, and a newsletter, and it sponsors annual conferences.

Contact:

National Coalition of Education Activists
P.O. Box 670
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
Telephone: 914-876-4580
Email: rfbs@aol.com

National Homeschool Association

The National Homeschool Association (NHA) is a private, not-for-profit organization serving families who homeschool their children. The organization advocates for individual choice and freedom in education and works towards informing the general public about homeschooling. NHA provides members with information about state and local homeschooling organizations. NHA provides a quarterly newsletter and sponsors an annual conference. Membership fees are $15 for an annual family membership, $25 for a two-year family membership, or $4 for a homeschool information resource packet.

Contact:

National Homeschool Association
P.O. Box 157290
Cincinnati, OH 45215-7290
Telephone: 513-772-9580
URL: http://www.alumni.caltech.edu/~casner/nha.html

National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children

The National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children (NAPSEC) is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in educational opportunities for exceptional children by enhancing the role of private special education. NAPSEC members include over 200 private special education schools nationally and over 600 schools at the state level. NAPSEC functions as a referral service, providing parents with a free listing of NAPSEC member schools that may be suitable for their children.

Contact:

National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children
1522 K St., NW, Suite 1032
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202-408-3338

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

Early Childhood News: The Journal of Professional Development

Designed for the early child care specialist, this magazine addresses issues such as teaching techniques in the classroom, families, problem behaviors in young children, parent-teacher conferences, and professional conferences. (Published bi-monthly; $30 per year.)

Early Childhood News
P.O. Box 49728
Dayton, OH 45449-0728
Telephone: 800-543-4383

Big Happy Family

This magazine, published by Home Life, provides practical advice and Christian support for large families and those who advocate for large families. Sections include letters from readers, food and menu ideas for large families, crafts, birthing information, adoption information, family health, organizing large families in small spaces, home schooling, and tips from grandparents. (11 issues per year; $25.)

Home Life
P.O. Box 1250
Fenton, MO 63026
Telephone: 800-346-6322

Ready To Learn: View and Do Guide for Children and Their Families

Published by WEIU PTV and Eastern Illinois University, this newsletter provides information on children's television shows broadcasting on PBS. Topical information is given for *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, Wishbone, Shining Time Station, Bill Nye, the Science Guy,* and others. The newsletter provides ideas for games and activities to expand on the topical ideas presented on the shows. (Free.)

WEIU TV & FM 5-20764
Radio TV Center Buzzard 139
600 Lincoln Ave.
Charleston, IL 61920-3099

LEEP Network News: A Newsletter for Educators and Families of Young Children with Disabilities

Part of the communication effort of the Regional Preschool Training and Technical Assistance Project, *LEEP Network News* provides information for educators and parents of disabled children 3 through 5 years of age. Professional training, staff development, evaluation, and conference information is included. There is also a Family Talk section that provides practical activities for parents and children.

LEEP
Human Development Center
LSUMC School of Allied Health Professions
1100 Florida Ave., Building 180
New Orleans, LA 70119

EDUTOPIA: The Newsletter of the George Lucas Educational Foundation

Published by the George Lucas Educational Foundation, a nonprofit organization, this newsletter promotes innovative efforts to improve education by integrating technology with teaching and learning. The organization has a variety of projects that it has supported within school districts to improve the learning environment for all students. Summaries of some of those initiatives are provided in the newsletter.

The George Lucas Educational Foundation
P.O. Box 3494
San Rafael, CA 94912
Telephone: 415-662-1600
Email: edutopia@glef.org
URL: http://glef.org

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: National Network for Child Care

Description: The "Taking Care of Kids" portion of this Web site contains several articles with information on the following topic areas: Child Abuse, Child Development, Curriculum, Disability, Diversity, Guidance and Discipline, Health and Safety, Nutrition, Parent Involvement, and School-Age Care. Each category contains detailed information of interest to parents and child care providers and educators.

Address: http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/families/nncc/

Name: Mi Pediatra

Description: Mi Pediatra is a Spanish-language site that provides information related to the health of children. Sections include a monthly online newsletter, articles, information on vaccinations, and links to related sites.

Address: http://www.mipediatra.com.mx

Name: LD On-line

Description: LD On-line is the interactive guide to learning disabilities for parents, teachers, and children. Features include glossary of terms, articles, listings of resources and useful forms, and an LD calendar.

Address: http://www.ldonline.org/

Name: Nashville Parent Magazine

Description: This online parenting magazine appears monthly and includes feature articles, reviews, links for parents, and contact information for organizations that support parents.

Address: http://www.nashvilleparent.com/

Name: National Families in Action

Description: The goal of National Families in Action is to help parents prevent drug abuse at home and in their community. This site offers information on the effects of drugs, connections to groups for information, a forum for asking questions, and a catalog of additional resources.

Address: http://www.emory.edu/NFIA/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 1997 is National Middle Level Education Month. The theme for this year's celebration is "Making a Difference in the Middle: High Standards, High Expectations for All." This theme is intended to encourage all of us to reaffirm standards and high expectations—for students, for educators, for schools, for parents, and for community members. By challenging ourselves to "expect the best" for all, we can ensure that middle schools in the next year(s) are demonstrating that students are achieving and developing at the highest level.

This is the tenth-year celebration of National Middle Education Month, which was started by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and is now co-sponsored by the National Middle School Association (NMSA).

In an effort to help you make a difference for middle school youth, the following materials have been developed by the NMSA and NASSP: a calendar of activities for each day in March, two sample speeches, a sample news release, sample invitations for school/community activities, and sample student activities for writing legislators and policy makers.

For additional information, visit the NASSP and NMSA Web sites:

NASSP: http://www.nassp.org
NMSA: http://www.nmsa.org

March 21, 1997, is National Single Parents' Day. To find out how more about this event, contact:

The Coalition for Single Parents' Day
P.O. Box 61014
Denver, CO 80206
Telephone: 303-899-4971
URL: http://privatei.com/~daymar21/

The Discovery Network will be rebroadcasting the Department of Education's Satellite Town Meetings, starting February 28, 1997, on The Learning Channel. The Town Meetings will air monthly on Fridays from 11 am to 12 noon (ET) as part of an ongoing series to explore how schools across the country are coping with challenges and finding solutions.

The schedule of rebroadcasts of the Satellite Town Meetings on the Learning Channel is below:

Friday, February 28, 1997

"New American High Schools: Preparing Youth for College and Careers"

Friday, March 28, 1997

"Making College More Accessible"

Friday, April 25, 1997

"School-to-Work Opportunities: Workplaces as Learning Environments"

Friday, May 23, 1997

"Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, and Other Choices in Public Education"

Friday, June 27, 1997

"Becoming a Reading, Literate Society"

Friday, July 4, 1997

"Ready to Learn: Preparing Young Children for School Success"

NetDay is approaching quickly. This year's NetDay is scheduled for April 19, 1997. NetDay is a grass roots volunteer effort to wire K-12 schools so they can network their computers and connect them to the Internet. Labor and materials are provided by volunteers and support from companies, unions, parents, teachers, students, and school employees.

To participate in NetDay, you can:

1. Volunteer--Pick a school and volunteer to install and test the school's wiring infrastructure.
2. Become a School Organizer--Organize NetDay in a local school and recruit volunteers. You can also rally the community behind NetDay and find local companies to sponsor a school.
3. Become a Sponsor--As a sponsor, you can provide trained staff to support NetDay planning and design, funding to purchase wiring kits for schools, tools and equipment to complete NetDay installation, training of volunteers , and encouragement of employee involvement with a local school through NetDay.

For more information, call 800-55-NET96 or visit the NetDay Web site:

URL: http://www.netday96.com/

The Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is dedicated to focusing public attention on the rights and needs of young children from birth through age 8. The event is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and its local affiliates. This year, WOYC will be April 13, 1997 through April 19, 1997, and the theme is "Early Years Are Learning Years--Make Them Count."

For more information:

Chicago Metro AEYC
410 South Michigan Ave., Suite 525
Chicago, IL 60605
Telephone: 312-427-5399

National Science & Technology Week '97 will be the week of April 20-26. During this week, scientists and engineers will be available to answer questions. This year's theme is Webs, Wires, and Waves, which focuses on communications and communications technologies.

If you have a question, you can call 800-682-2716 on Wednesday, April 23, or email asknstw@nsf.gov

Contact:

Michael Fluharty
NSTW
c/o National Science Foundation
Room 1245
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230
Telephone: 703-306-1070
Email: nstw@nsf.gov
URL: http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nstw/start.htm

CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE: National PTA

Date: March 10-13, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Legislative Conference of the National PTA

Contact:

700 N. Wabash Ave.
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 312-6670-6782

CONFERENCE: Children's Defense Fund

Date: March 11-15, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The Annual Conference of the Children's Defense Fund

Contact:

Children's Defense Fund
25 E St., NW
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-662-3674

CONFERENCE: Second Annual Family Empowerment Institute Conference

Date: March 14-15, 1997

Place: Northglenn, Colorado

Description: The Second Annual Family Empowerment Institute Conference is being sponsored in part by the BUENO Center for Multicultural Education and Fiesta Educativa de Colorado. The Institute will bring together parents and educators working in Title I, Adult Literacy, Bilingual Education, Migrant Education, and Special Education programs.

Contact:

Dr. Rodolfo L. Chavez
Telephone: 303-492-3358

Ms. Barbara Vialpando
Telephone: 303-623-7193

CONFERENCE: Third Annual Parent Involvement Conference

Date: March 15, 1997

Place: Champaign, Illinois

Description: The Third Annual Parent Involvement Conference is sponsored the Champaign Unit Four School District, the Urbana School District 116, and Champaign-Ford County Regional Office of Education. It will feature sessions on Understanding and Preventing Gangs, Character Building, Conflict Resolution, and more. Child care will be available. Hosted at the Franklin Middle School, 817 N. Harris, Champaign Illinois, preregistration is encouraged.

Contact:

Maggie Whicker

Telephone: 217-355-5849

CONFERENCE: Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance

Date: March 20-22, 1997

Place: Orlando, Florida

Description: This is the Joint International Conference on Developing Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Tolerance. General sessions, workshops, panels, exhibits, and networking activities will address the various forms of religious, racial, and ethnic intolerance among school-age children; programs that schools, communities, and churches may use to reduce intolerance; the legal and policy implications of creating and implementing various school and public policies on hate crimes; and programs for effective collaborations. The keynote speaker will be Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Contact:

Telephone: 800-537-4903
Fax: 941-778-6818
Email: 102630.2245@compuserve.com

CONFERENCE: Strengthening America's Families

Date: March 23-25, 1997

Place: Washington Vista Hotel; Washington, DC

Description: Strengthening America's Families is a national training conference and a showcase of model family programs for delinquency prevention. This conference features America's most effective parent and family life training programs which are presented and discussed by the creators of the programs. Professionals from child, youth, and family agencies, public schools, Head Start, Boys and Girls Clubs, health and mental health centers, law enforcement, and empowerment zones are encouraged to attend.

Contact:

Barry Bluth
Telephone: 801-581-8498

CONFERENCE: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)

Date: April 16-19, 1997

Place: Omni-Sheraton Hotel; Washington, DC

Description: The NCCCC conference features daily keynote speakers, tours of campus children's centers, a workshop track for new directors, and training for people interested in lobbying for change in Washington, DC. A special track for teachers will also be available.

Contact:

Gail Solit
Gallaudet University
Telephone: 202-651-5130
Fax: 202-651-5531
Email: gasolit@gallua.gallaudet.edu

CONFERENCE: National School-Age Care Association Conference

Date: April 17-19, 1997

Place: Orlando, FL

Description: Master the MAGIC (Making a Genuine Impact on Children) of the 1997 National School-Age Care Association Conference.

Contact:

Florida School Age Child Care Coalition
PO Box 348
Christmas, FL 32709-0348
Telephone: 407-568-6497

CONFERENCE: Family Literacy: The Power and the Promise

Date: April 20-22, 1997

Place: Louisville, Kentucky

Description: This is the Sixth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy presented by the National Center for Family Literacy. Sessions will include such topics as what the future holds and family literacy's place in it; welfare reform and how it will affect family literacy programs; and the top thinkers in family literacy.

Contact:

National Center for Family Literacy

Waterfront Plaza
325 W. Main St., Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Telephone: 502-584-1133

CONFERENCE: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) "La Semana del Nino (Week of the Young Child)" Educator's Institute

Date: April 22-24, 1997

Place: Omni Hotel; San Antonio, Texas

Description: The Fourth Annual IDRA early childhood education training institute. Featured topics include: restructuring for success, multi-age practices, the role of play in early childhood, and involving parents.

Contact:

Hilaria Bauer or Carol Chavez
Telephone: 210-684-8180

CONFERENCE: The Conference Board's 1997 Business and Education Conference

Date: May 15-16, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: Leading educators and employers from across the country will examine how to strengthen school-business partnerships that promote family involvement in education at the Conference Board's 1997 Business and Education Conference. The theme of this year's conference is "Better Education Is Everybody's Business." U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley will give a progress report on the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. The conference will feature speakers from leading organizations involved in improving the quality of education, and the Conference Board will announce its "Best in Class" Awards at a luncheon.

Contact:

The Conference Board's Customer Service Department
Telephone: 212-339-0345
Fax: 212-980-7014
Email: orders@conference-board.org

CONFERENCE: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities

Date: May 18-20, 1997

Place: Biscayne Bay Hotel; Miami, Florida

Description: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities is intended to provide a forum on best appropriate practices and services for all children and families; to build communities that value and support the diversity of families and caregivers in the nurturing of young children; to present innovation, leadership, and effective collaboration in working with and on behalf of children and families; and to showcase the most effective and highest quality services and programs for children and families.

Contact:

Luis Hernandez
Telephone: 305-375-4670

CONFERENCE: National Head Start Association

Date: May 28-31, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: This is the Annual Conference of the National Head Start Association.

Contact:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St., Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-0875

CONFERENCE: Families, Technology, and Education Conference

Date: October 30-November 1, 1997

Place: Itasca, Illinois

Description: Just as the automobile changed family life and expectations, creating not only new opportunities but also unexpected challenges, so are new electronic technologies changing the ways we raise and educate our children. This conference will provide opportunities to reflect on the nature of current and emerging technologies and on the ways they affect family life and the education of children. The impact of the Internet, new telephone technologies, television, and other media will be the focus of discussions. Presenters at the conference will include technology experts, policymakers, program planners, educators, parents, and parenting professionals. The conference is intended to address the needs of many types of professionals who work with families, including family support personnel, educators, corporate executives, media specialists, librarians, health care specialists, publishers, and information systems developers. The conference will provide attendees with an increased awareness of the technologies

available to children, families, and communities, an increased awareness of how to use technologies to serve their communities, and opportunities to interact with leaders, colleagues, and parents in order to better understand the impact of technology on family culture and children's education.

Contact:

Anne S. Robertson, Program Chair

National Parent Information Network

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Children's Research Center

51 Gerty Drive

Champaign, IL 61820-7469

Telephone: 800-583-4135

Email: arobrtsn@uiuc.edu

URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/fte/papers.html

Return to the Parent News for March 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for April 1997

Volume 3, Number 4

- What's New on NPIN
- April's Feature:
  Brain Development in Young Children: The Early Years Are Learning Years
  by Dawn Ramsburg
- Community Spotlight:
  Building Community Collaborations to Support Young Children
  by Dawn Ramsburg
- Of Interest
  - *Preventing Substance Abuse at Home and at School* by Anne Robertson
  - *A Discussion of Breast Feeding* by Debbie Reese
  - *Where Can You Go for Information on Disabilities such as Asperger's Syndrome?*by Debbie Reese
  - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
  - *Support for Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents*
  - *National Library Week*
  - *If an Adolescent Begins to Fail in School, What Can Teachers and Parents Do?*by Anne S. Robertson
  - *"I Am Your Child" Early Childhood Public Engagement Campaign*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
- The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for April 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during March 1997

NPIN now has a search feature by which you can search for words in the full text of any document on NPIN. To use the search feature, return to the NPIN Home Page and choose *Search NPIN* from the menu.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Helping Children Learn at Home section, the following items have been added:

- *Helping Your Child with Homework*
  This publication addresses the purposes and functions of homework, as well as specific ideas for how parents can help their child be more successful with homework. The publication also contains resources for parents, the National Education Goals, and a checklist for helping your child with homework.
- *Helping Your Child Learn to Read*
  This publication discusses how parents should facilitate the acquisition of reading skills in their children, first by reading to their children beginning in the early years, and continuing by integrating reading with writing as the child grows. The publication includes sections of children's resources and parent' resources.
- *Helping Your Child Learn Science*
  This publication introduces key concepts to learn in the area of science, as well as almost two dozen activities for children and parents to do together at home and in the community. This publication is also available in a Spanish version (see next item).
- *Cómo ayudar a sus hijos a aprender cienia*
  This publication introduces key concepts to learn in the area of science, as well as almost two dozen activities for children and parents to do together at home and in the community. This publication is also available in an English version (see previous item).
- *Helping Your Child Learn History*
  This publication addresses the importance of history in a child's education and provides 16 history-related activities which parents and students can do together. A section on local and national resources can be found in the Appendices section.

In the Children and the Media section, the following items have been added:

- *Television Violence and Behavior: A Research Summary*
  This digest from the Eric Clearinghouse on Information and Technology discusses research findings which generally point to a positive association between television violence and aggressive behavior. Factors such as the characteristics of viewers and how the violence is portrayed are are addressed.

In the Early Childhood - Learning section, the following items have been added:

- *Block play: Building a child's mind*
  This publication discusses the benefits of using unit blocks as a part of children's playtime. Examples of social, intellectual, physical, and creative enhancement are given. Classroom play is also addressed.
- *Water play: A key to children's living-learning environment*
  This publication advocates the use of water as an important source of activities for children's play. Many ideas and activities are given for waterplay.
- *10 Signs of a Great Preschool*
  In this publication, NAEYC recommends 10 areas to consider when choosing or assessing a child care facility. A discussion of child care demographics follows, with resources and contact information following.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following items have been added:

- *High-quality child care: Luxury option or standard equipment?*
  This publication addresses 16 areas of interest which should be important and standard parts of any child care program.
- *10 Signs of a Great Preschool*
  In this publication, NAEYC recommends 10 areas to consider when choosing or assessing a child care facility. A discussion of child care demographics follows, with resources and contact information following.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Split Ends: Teenage Stepchildren* by Ruth Webber.
- *Adventures in Learning with the Food Guide Pyramid* from the Association for Child Development.
- *UNICEF Annual Report, 1996* from the United Nations Children's Fund.
- *UNICEF Annual Report, 1995* from the United Nations Children's Fund.
- How Can We as Parents and Educators Foster Metacognitive Development? in *Childhood Education: International Perspectives* by Tunde Kovac-Cerovic.

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Early Childhood News: The Journal of Professional Development*
- *Big Happy Family*
- *Ready to Learn: View and Do Guide for Children and Their Families*
- *LEEP Network News: A Newsletter for Educators and Families of Young Children with Disabilities*
- EDUTOPIA: The Newsletter of the George Lucas Educational Foundation

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Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Vanished Children's Alliance
- National Coalition of Education Activists
- National Homeschool Association

- National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Go to top of page.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

April's Feature

Brain Development in Young Children: The Early Years ARE Learning Years

by Dawn Ramsburg

Introduction

Early Years are Learning Years... Make Them Count! This is the theme of this year's Week of the Young Child (WOYC), an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose of the WOYC is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to plan how we (as parents, as professionals, and as citizens of states, communities, and the nation) will better meet those needs. The WOYC is scheduled this year for April 13-19, 1997.

To explore the importance of the early years and to provide ideas for how you can support young children in your community, this issue of *Parent News* contains a feature article about emerging research on brain development in young children, a community spotlight on how to build community collaborations to support young children, and a description of the "I Am Your Child" early childhood public engagement campaign.

Much attention has been focused in recent years on the importance of the early years for young children's healthy mental development. Activities have included a plenary session devoted to the need for investment in children from birth through the first three years of life at the National Governors Association (February 1997) meeting and a guest appearance by Hillary Rodham Clinton at the April 1997 meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, where she reiterated the importance of early experience in child development and described a conference the White House will host in late April on early development and learning. A primary reason for this increased attention was the 1994 release of *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Young Children* by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This report documented the burgeoning literature on young children's emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and brain development and concluded that "how children function from the preschool years all the way through adolescence, and even adulthood, hinges in large part on their experience before the age of three" (p. 6).

Why the increased attention on the early years? Since the 1970s, strong evidence has emerged that suggests that activity, experience, and stimulation can alter brain development. In recent years, technological advances have enabled researchers to make important advances and discoveries in brain research. As a result of the emerging evidence, a shift is taking place in traditional views of development in young children.

Emerging Views on Brain Development in Young Children

In the past, the two dominant views on children's development proposed that children either came into the world genetically pre-programmed ("nature") or that they were a "blank slate" on which their environment shaped their development ("nurture"). The debate over nature vs. nurture is fading quickly, however, as scientists now are investigating the complex ways in which genes and environment interact. Scientists understand that both nature and nurture shape brain development, and that each set of influences is dominant to varying degrees at various points in time.

Brain Development in the Prenatal Period

Before birth, nature is the dominant actor in brain development, although the environment also plays an important role. According to Dr. Pasco Rakic, a professor of neuroscience at Yale University, "The number of neurons and the way that they are organized is determined by heredity" (Jabs, 1996, p. 24). Scientists know that during the third week of pregnancy, a thin layer of cells in the developing embryo folds inward to create a fluid-filled cylinder called the "neural tube" (Berk, 1994, p. 99). It is in the neural tube where the production of *neurons*, the brain cells that store and transmit information, begins--at the rate of 250,000 per minute (Nash, 1997, p. 52).

By the end of the second trimester, the process of producing neurons is completed. No more neurons will *ever* be produced again in an individual's lifetime. Some neurons are programmed for specific functions such as breathing, controlling the heartbeat, regulating body temperatures, or producing reflexes. But, for the most part, neurons are not designated to perform specific tasks, and thus brain development is not complete at this point.

Although nature or genetics plays the dominant role in the prenatal period, the environment is important at this time as well. Researchers have found that environmental factors such as maternal malnutrition, substance abuse (including alcohol, smoking, illegal drugs, and use of over-the-counter medications), exposure to chemicals or radiation, and viral infections (such as measles) can lead to adverse effects on the developing brain.

Brain Development Following Birth

While newborns are born with all the neurons they will ever have, a new phase of brain development begins after birth--the wiring phase. Following birth, each of the brain's 100 billion neurons creates links to thousands of others (Nash, 1997, p. 53). This process is accomplished as neurons produce a web of wire-like fibers called *axons* (which transmit signals) and *dendrites* (which receive signals). Once axons make their first connections, the nerves begin to fire (Nash, 1997, p. 53). It is at this point that the environment begins to take over in the process of brain development. Scientists often describe this stage as the equivalent of creating telephone trunk lines between the right neighborhoods in the right cities. At this point in development, the brain has to sort out which wires belong to which house (Nash, 1997, p. 53). It is with these maps that learning will take place (Carnegie, 1994).

The most important factor in this process of developing connections is stimulation, or repeated experience. Scientists now know that in the months after birth the number of synapses increases from 50 trillion to 1,000 trillion (Carnegie, 1994). Neurons that are stimulated by input from the surrounding environment continue to establish new synapses. Those that are seldom stimulated soon die off. According to Dr. Harry Chugani, a professor of pediatric neurology at Wayne State University, "It's like a highway system. Roads with the most traffic get widened. The ones that are rarely used fall into disrepair" (Nash, 1997, p. 26).

Critical Periods in Brain Development

Because of the evidence emerging on synaptic development, scientists believe that appropriate stimulation of the child's brain is critically important during periods in which the formation of synapses is at its peak (Berk, 1994). It is during these critical periods, or windows of opportunity that exist for different brain functions, when a child's experiences can make the most difference. And, for some areas, if the connections between neurons are not developed during these critical periods, they will never develop at all.

One area of brain development that has received much attention in determining its critical period is vision. It has been found that the synapses associated with vision multiply quickly in 2- to 4-month-olds and keep increasing until around 8 months (Jabs, 1996, p. 25). At 8 months, each neuron is connected to 15,000 other neurons (Begley, 1996, p. 56). This rate makes sense when we realize that infants have limited motor skills and spend much waking time watching the world around them. Yet researchers have found that a baby whose eyes are clouded by cataracts from birth will, despite cataract removal surgery at the age of 2, be forever blind. This finding indicates that the window of opportunity for vision does not stay open for a long period of time.

Implications of These Findings

Does this research mean that it is too late to make a difference in the brain development after age 3? Absolutely not. Researchers have found that the brain during the first years of life is malleable, citing instances in which very young children who suffer strokes or injuries that wipe out an entire brain hemisphere still mature into highly functioning adults (Nash, 1997, p. 54). Children have also been found to overcome emotional and physical abuse suffered during the first year, presumably because of "plasticity," or the ability to rewire damaged brain areas.

It is also important for parents not to push children during this period and provide too much stimulation. Parents who try to rush children through the stages of development are asking children to function with capacities that may not be ready to be used (Jabs, 1996, p. 25). In addition, if parents try to push children, they may form connections between certain activities and stress. Parents who try to force a child to complete a puzzle before he or she is developmentally ready may decrease the child's disposition to do the puzzle or engage in related activities because of the stress connection. For more information on dispositions in young children and how to encourage the disposition to be intellectually curious, see Lilian Katz's ERIC/EECE Digest "Dispositions as Educational Goals."

With few exceptions, with vision as perhaps one notable exception, the windows of opportunity in brain development do not close abruptly. What research findings do indicate is the importance of helping children develop a sound foundation in early learning, so that they have the building blocks for a lifetime of learning. This foundation comes from stimulating education and child care experiences during the early years.

Sources:

Begley, S. (1996, February 19). Your child's brain. *Newsweek, 127,* 55-62.

Berk, L. (1994). *Infants and children: Prenatal through early childhood.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Carnegie Corporation of New York. (1994). *Starting points for young children.* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Jabs, C. (1996, November). Your baby's brainpower. *Working Mother, 19,* 24-28.

Nash, J. (1997, February 3). Fertile minds. *Time, 149,* 48-56.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Community Spotlight

Building Community Collaborations to Support Young Children

by Dawn Ramsburg

The theme of this year's Week of the Young Child encourages us to make the early years in young children's lives *count*. But what does this mean? Many organizations are learning that in times of limited resources and increased demands it is almost impossible to accomplish tasks using only their own resources, while collaboration offers possibilities for maximizing what they can accomplish. The trend toward collaboration is now common in efforts to support young children and their families. One reason is that nonprofit organizations and government agencies that have supported young children and their families in the past now face budget crises and pressures to produce results in short periods of time without any extra resources and possibly even with reduced or lost resources.

Despite the growing recognition of the benefits of working with others who serve the same or similar groups of people, problems sometimes arise when trying to collaborate with others. These problems often stem from a lack of understanding of what it means to collaborate with others and a lack of knowledge of how to collaborate effectively.

The purpose of this community spotlight is to provide you with information on the skills and resources necessary for creating efforts to support young children and families in your community. It is hoped that you will gain some of the knowledge needed to build effective collaborations in your community--collaborations that may be featured in future community spotlights.

What Is Collaboration?

In order to effectively collaborate, it is important to know what collaboration means. *Community-based collaboration* refers to the process by which citizens, agencies, organizations, and businesses make formal, sustained commitments to work together to accomplish a shared vision (Chandler Center for Community Leadership, n.d.). More simply, collaboration involves two or more agencies sharing information and resources to achieve common goals (Iowa State University Extension, 1992). The two key components of these definitions are sharing both information and resources as well as having a shared vision.

While some groups perform similar activities, these activities would not be considered a collaboration unless both of these criteria were included. For examples, organizations often share information, but they may not have a common goal (this sharing would be considered networking), or they form a partnership that works toward eliminating competition, but they do not share resources. According to the National Network for Collaboration (1995), the goal of collaboration is to bring individuals and members of communities, agencies, and organizations together in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not easily be solved by one group alone.

Why Collaborate?

There have been nine trends identified in society that support the growth of community-based collaborations (Chandler Center for Community Leadership, n.d.). These trends are:

1. *Shift to Community*--As the decentralization of government continues, the community is taking on more responsibility for designing solutions to problems and issues.
2. *Redefining Private and Public Roles*--As the federal budget deficit continues to constrain government action on social problems, private sector firms are contracting to perform many traditional, government functions, which is blurring the boundaries that have traditionally defined the roles of the public and private sectors, as well as individual versus institutional responsibilities.
3. *Policy Development*--Both public and private sector policy support the merging of existing and new resources to focus on commonly defined issues.
4. *New Issues*--There are many new issues emerging that are affecting children and their families at a faster pace than previously experienced and often without any pre-existing solutions to the problems.
5. *Citizen Participation*--More people are actively interested in doing "their part for the community."
6. *Quality of Life/Wellness*--Quality of life issues, particularly the health of children and families, are emerging as key areas of public concern.
7. *Fragmentation of Services*--Although cooperation is replacing competition, there is still fragmentation, unproductive competition, lack of communication, and unplanned service delivery.
8. *Focus on Root Causes*--A clearer understanding of youth development and the factors that dramatically increase the successful growth to adulthood is evolving along with the recognition that the community is a vital part of each person's life.
9. *Shared Decisions*--Organizations are examining the efficiencies gained by addressing common issues or jointly delivering similar services as collaborations reduce duplication of cost and effort.

Advantages of Collaboration

Collaboration has been found to have immediate and long-term effects as well as direct and indirect effects (Iowa State University Extension, 1992). In other words, while some of the benefits may not be seen right away, it is possible that there will be some benefits that appear later. Some of the potential benefits from collaboration include:

1. effective and efficient program delivery;
2. improved professional development;
3. improved communication (which leads to more consistent and reliable information to clients, an increased use of programs, more public support, better understanding of policy and legislative issues, better direction given to clients, and improved evaluation of programs);
4. elimination of duplication;
5. increased use of programs;
6. improved public image;
7. better needs assessment;
8. consistency of information; and
9. increased availability of resources (new staff, new knowledge, new equipment and facilities, and new services).

Challenges to Collaboration

Despite these benefits, there are also many challenges and barriers that must be overcome when trying to collaborate with other groups. These include:

1. *Turf Protection and Mistrust*--Groups may not be receptive to new ideas or to sharing resources.
2. *Decision-Making Processes*--Groups need to determine how decisions will be made, by consensus, majority rule, or some other method.
3. *Limited Resources*--Groups may feel restricted within their collaboration because of limited funding and the inability to obtain new resources.
4. *Dropping Out*--Group members may feel compelled to resign from the collaboration if conflict over policy occurs.
5. *Reduced Participation*--Group members or organizations that are going through a crisis may

reduce collaborative involvement.

6. *Broad Representation*--Groups should work to gain an appropriate cross-section of partners within the community that are interested in the issue.
7. *Communication*--Groups should maintain open and frequent communication so that all individuals and organizations feel included.
8. *Solid Leadership*--Groups that engage a facilitator or maintain strong leadership have a greater likelihood of success.

Common Characteristics of Successful Community-Based Collaborations

Despite these obstacles, many community-based collaborations have been successful. Characteristics of successful collaborations follow:

1. Partners have clearly and specifically defined outcomes and benchmarks.
2. Partners are committed to improving one or more conditions within the community for the long run.
3. Partners are willing to define their commitment and specific role.
4. Partners are willing to ask for information, resources, skills, and authority.
5. Partners support each other and acknowledge (give credit to) citizens and systems outside the group that support and help the collaboration.
6. Partners are open to and accepting of change and adjustment.
7. Partners acknowledge, understand, and share in risk taking.
8. Partners do not come to the table with preconceived notions of the "right way to solve a problem."
9. Partners monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Conclusion

Collaborations will not be the ideal solution for every situation. Nevertheless, for some situations, collaborations can create a win-win situation for all involved. Community-based collaborations can lead to flexible working environments where authority is shared and all are involved in the process of improving outcomes for individuals, the service delivery, and the overall condition of the community.

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National Network for Collaboration
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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

Preventing Substance Abuse at Home and at School

by Anne S. Robertson

Parents frequently feel that when children become adolescents they need less supervision. However, a recent report by the Research Institute on Addictions suggests healthy adolescent development requires a lot of adult supervision. The report indicates that children raised in a family that is emotionally supportive and that actively monitors their children have lower levels of problem behaviors. According to sociologist Grace Barnes: "Monitoring means knowing where your kids are, who their friends are, when they are coming in, and so on" (Barnes, 1995, p. 1).

A supportive environment where the family openly praises and encourages their children and maintains open communication allows teens to be more receptive to monitoring. This type of family relationship was found in a cross-section of teenagers who had low levels of problem behaviors regardless of race, gender, or family income.

The study also indicated what does not seem to work. Attempting to control or coerce teens is associated with more problem behaviors, particularly if coercion includes physical punishment such as slapping and hitting. At the other end of the continuum, too many rational, logical explanations without concrete guidelines may lead to increased problems, particularly substance abuse (Barnes, 1995, p. 2).

Additionally, the results of a new study sponsored by the Department of Education (Lazarovici, 1997, pp. 1-3) indicates that many of the federally funded drug prevention programs are ineffective for several reasons, such as:

- lack of support or training for teachers and counselors in the area of substance abuse;
- limited time available during the school day for the delivery of effective programs;
- ineffective coordination of programs being implemented within the school or community.

Study results also indicate that few districts used research or were aware of effective programs when they were developing their own programs.

However, there were some successful strategies used in some districts. These programs incorporated parental and community involvement with effective training that was integrated into broad-based school and community programs. The successful aspects of these programs were reflected in research that focused on community-wide efforts to support teens and prevent substance abuse. As a result of these successful programs and other research, the Department of Education is pressing schools that use Safe and Drug-Free Schools money to show that they are using tested methods for their program development (Lazarovici, 1997, p. 3). The evidence on this issue seems clear: when schools and communities collaborate to prevent teen drug abuse, they are more successful in their programming than either group working independently.

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

A Discussion of Breast Feeding

by Debbie Reese

Recently, a rather heated discussion took place on PARENTING-L, an Internet listserv sponsored by the National Parent Information Network. The topic was breast feeding. The "heat" did not center around whether or not to breast feed; subscribers to PARENTING-L seem to agree that this is the best method of feeding an infant. The issue, however, is where to breast feed. The discussion prompted this article for Parent News, which will examine many different aspects of breast feeding. Readers interested in reviewing the PARENTING-L discussion may do so by visiting the PARENTING-L archives at gopher://ericir.syr.edu:70/11/Listservs/Parenting-L.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Breast Feeding

> "*Because of its nutritional composition, human milk is the ideal food for human infants*" (Shevlov, 1994, p. 68).
>
> "*Breast milk has so many advantages-it's perfect for a human baby*" (Brazelton, 1992, p. 9).

These statements reflect the consensus within the medical establishment that breast feeding is the best feeding method. Most family practitioners and pediatricians encourage mothers to breast feed their infants. Nutritional benefits come about because babies are not allergic to breast milk and because the milk provides the correct ratio of protein, sugar, minerals, vitamins, and enzymes, along with antibodies that provide the baby with immunity to certain illnesses. As a result, breast-fed babies are typically healthier and have fewer infections than formula-fed babies.

In addition to nutritional advantages, breast feeding requires skin-to-skin contact that promotes attachment. Mothers report that breast feeding encourages their self-confidence as they nurture and care for their infants. Finally, breast milk has economic advantages because it is less expensive than formula. Although a breast-feeding woman must increase her caloric intake in order for her body to prepare the milk, the increased food cost is still only about one-third the cost of formula (Shelov, 1994).

Societal Pressure: Is the "Perfect Mother" a "Breast Feeding Mother?"

> "*Since the mid 1980's, the social and medical pressure on women to breast-feed has increased...*" (Maher, 1992, p. 2).

As Maher (1992) points out, there is tremendous pressure on mothers to breast feed their infants. For the most part, this pressure is based on the nutritional benefits of breast milk and the medical establishment's advocacy of breast feeding. However, Maher (1992) makes a strong case that breast feeding is not done in isolation. The decision to breast feed must take into account the culture, society, and environment in which the mother lives. Van Esterik (1989) sees the infant-feeding decision as a complex system that includes urban environments, empowerment of women, medicalization of infant feeding, and commoditization of food.

If a nursing mother returns to work, is the workplace environment conducive to her need to express and store milk during the day? In a two-year study of the potential costs to employers, it was found that 93 percent of formula-fed infants fell ill, while only 59 percent of breast-fed infants became ill during the same time. As a result of fewer illnesses in the infants, there was a lower absenteeism rate for breast-feeding mothers, at a significant savings to employers. It would seem beneficial for employers to support employees who wish to breast feed by providing a room for privacy and perhaps a refrigerator for storing expressed milk. These conditions rarely occur, and as a result, 55 percent of working mothers try breast feeding, but only 24 percent of part-time and 12.5 percent of full-time working mothers actually continue breast feeding for 5 to 6 months (Breast-feeding Promotion Committee of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, n.d.).

Many women return to work and plan a feeding regime for their infant that includes both breast milk and infant formula. Unfortunately, many women who opt to supplement breast milk with infant formula are made to feel guilty by individuals who pressure the mother to breast feed exclusively. In contrast, a generation ago, mothers were told by the medical establishment that infant formula was superior to breast milk. The result was that few women breast fed. Some of these women now advise their daughters (with newborn children) that infant formula is just as good as breast milk and thus fail to support a woman's decision to breast feed.

Breast Feeding--Can It Be Deemed "Indecent Exposure?"

The answer seems to be a resounding "absolutely not." However, many breast-feeding women have had the unpleasant experience of being asked by law enforcement and security personnel to *stop breast feeding* their child in their chosen location. Women have had this experience when nursing in public spaces like shopping malls and in more private spaces like their own vehicles.

Recognizing the benefits of breast feeding, 12 states have enacted legislation that clearly states that breast feeding is *not* indecent exposure and is *not* a criminal behavior. The laws on breast feeding in New York state provide women with legal recourse if they are prevented from breast feeding. Further, some states (e.g., Iowa and Idaho) have amended their jury duty statutes to excuse breast-feeding women. The need for such legislation is a direct response to individuals in society who believe that breast feeding in public is indecent exposure (Baldwin & Friedman, 1997). A list summarizing legislation on breast feeding can be viewed on the World Wide Web at http://www.lalecheleague.org/LawBills.html.

In her book *The Anthropology of Breast-feeding: Natural Law or Social Construct*, Maher (1992) devotes a portion of a chapter to the issue of where to breast feed. She writes: "Most Westerners, both men and women, feel discomfort, not to say disgust at the idea of a woman breast-feeding outside the home, or in public" (p. 21). One woman recalls being informed that a female co-worker felt uncomfortable when she breast fed her 2-month-old son in their shared office space (J. Bezdicek, personal communication, 1997). While some object to the act itself, others react strongly only if the child being breast fed is no longer an infant, but a toddler (M. Feldman, personal communication, March 1997).

Many women were not breast fed themselves as infants, and their efforts to breast feed their own children, even in the homes of their own parents and siblings, can oftentimes be met with uncomfortable silence or hasty retreats from the room. In these situations, the nursing mother will seek the privacy of a bedroom. In public places, the mother often must nurse the baby in a bathroom stall (R. Arsenault, personal communication, March 1997).

The discomfort and objection to breast feeding in public may be related to the Western view of the breast as a sexual object. Maher notes that many manuals on breast feeding point out that some women feel inhibited about breast feeding because they know men view the breast as an erotic stimulus. This awareness creates anxiety that is often strong enough to influence a woman's decision not to breast feed.

Feminists view a woman's decision to breast feed as a decision to take control of her own body. Van Esterik (1989) argues that the development of the supportive environment necessary for successful breast feeding is a feminist issue because "it encourages women's self-reliance, confirms a woman's power to control her own body, challenges models of women as consumers and sex objects, requires a new interpretation of women's work, and encourages solidarity among women" (p. 69).

Conclusion

Recent research has indicated that although the medical profession firmly believes in the benefits of breast feeding, physicians do not typically receive information in their medical training that would help them support a woman's decision to breast feed. An ongoing study at the University of North Carolina is working towards designing educational programs for physicians to increase their ability to counsel and support women about the decision to breast feed (*Teaching Physicians to Support Breastfeeding Women*, 1997).

Similar efforts must be taken on a public level to educate society that women have the right to breast feed in public. There are many individuals who would like to support a nursing relationship, but don't know quite how to go about it (Biever, personal communication, 1997). Public education and efforts to coax detractors from their view that the breast is primarily a sexual object are steps in the right direction.

The La Leche League has a Web site that includes "Responding to and Avoiding Criticism about Breastfeeding." It contains helpful ways to deal with criticism and phrases nursing mothers can use to counter challenges they may face.

The decision-making process parents go through when deciding how to feed their infant is not one that is made lightly. The decision deserves respect and support, not challenges and obstacles that create anxiety in the parents.

For Further Information

Breastfeeding and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Division at the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH). URL: http://www.irh.org/

How Companies Can Support Employees Who Are Breast-feeding. URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/pnews/pnewd96/pnewd96f.html

La Leche League Web site. URL: http://www.lalecheleague.org/

Parent-L is a listserv for individuals who wish to support breast feeding, extended breast feeding, and attachment parenting issues. For more information on subscribing, visit this Web site: http://www.greatstar.com/lois/welcome.html

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). URL: http://bbs.elogica.com.br/aleitamento/ingles/waba.htm#INICIO

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

Where Can You Go for Information on Disabilities Such as Asperger's Syndrome?

by Debbie Reese

Many parents visit the National Parent Information Network (NPIN) seeking information about learning disabilities and how they may work at home with a child who has been diagnosed with a specific disability. While NPIN includes some information on this topic, we suggest parents also contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (703-264-9474 or 800-328-0272) for further information. Their Web site URL is http://www.cec.sped.org/ericec.htm.

Parents with access to the World Wide Web (either in their home or at the local public library) can often conduct a search of the Web and locate useful information. For example, typing "Asperger's Syndrome" in the search box of the Alta Vista search engine located many Web sites with information, including the *On-Line Asperger's Syndrome Information and Support* Web page (URL: http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/). Sponsored by the University of Delaware, the site includes definitions of Asperger's Syndrome and hypertext links to universities conducting research on the syndrome and personal stories written by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome.

Parents can also submit an electronic query to Parents AskERIC (see *PARENTS ASKERIC* in the November 1996 edition of *Parent News*). A parent asking for information about Asperger's Syndrome would receive several citations to articles about the syndrome, as well as other information the AskERIC staff is able to compile.

Finally, we suggest parents work closely with their child's pediatrician and the child's teachers and school staff. All these individuals are concerned with the child's welfare, and a team approach may be the best approach to helping children with learning disabilities.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in *Parent News* over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter Nine: TV Is Only Part of the Picture (see previous issues for chapters 1-8).

The purpose of this chapter is to teach children about stereotypes, so that they will understand that they should not generalize about people from the examples they see on TV. This chapter examines the many stereotypes of families, men's and women's roles, racial and ethnic groups, the elderly, and persons with disabilities in an attempt to teach children that we are all members of different groups that are neither good nor bad, but an important part of the world we all live in.

Television can be a useful learning tool in many cases because it can show children what life is like for people in other parts of our country as well as for people around the world. However, many children do not realize that most TV programs are made to entertain rather than teach us, and they may not know that a program can be realistic in some ways and very unrealistic in others.

Most of the television research in the area of stereotypes has concentrated on race and sex roles. During the 1960s and 1970s, research findings reported that there were relatively few nonwhite and female characters on television--one-third of all television characters were female, and nonwhites made up only 10 percent of all television characters. Moreover, both women and nonwhites tended to be portrayed in traditional, stereotypic roles, and they were often depicted as dependent on or subordinate to white men. Finally, there were also few TV characters under the age of 16 or over the age of 40.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there have been improvements for minorities on television. During that time, the *Cosby Show* became one of the most popular shows on television and the *Oprah Winfrey Show* became one of the most popular talk shows. Nevertheless, the portrayal of minorities on television has remained relatively low.

According to the National Commission on Working Women, the portrayal of women on television has also improved since 1981. For example, the jobs female characters have tend to be more interesting and varied,and the percentage of female characters who work is approximately the same as in the "real world." This is a major change since the 1960s when most women were portrayed as homemakers, and the 1970s when women were portrayed as either employed or mothers, but not both. Nonetheless, men still outnumber women on TV by three to one.

Research studies have shown that television has far more power to influence children's attitudes than may have previously been believed. For example, when children watch programs that portray African-Americans favorably, their attitudes towards African-Americans tend to be more positive, whereas programs that portray African-Americans more negatively will increase children's negative attitudes towards African-Americans.

While it has taken TV producers a long time to include more positive female characters and minority group characters on television, television still presents only part of the picture. Yes, TV does portray more working women, but the women are often glamorous and rarely in ordinary jobs. Very few programs portray retired people or persons with disabilities as main characters. In addition, there are still many reruns and old movies on TV that present very stereotypic characters. Thus, it is important for parents to moderate the potentially negative impact of television on children by talking to them about television's stereotypes and omissions.

Discussion Ideas

1. TV does not always give us an accurate picture of what life is like. Ask your child to think of a program about a family that is different from your family.
2. Have your child name TV stars. Compare the number of TV stars for different categories (i.e., the number of male stars, the number of female stars, the number of African-American stars, etc.).
3. Discuss with your child that not all people are like the ones we see on TV. Explain the word stereotype. Ask your child to identify the similarities and differences between the stars they see on TV and people they know in real life.

Activity Ideas

1. Be a stereotype detective. Find a stereotypic character on commercials or TV programs. What are the exaggerated characteristics that make that character seem like a stereotype instead of a real person? (Clues: clothes, accent, facial expressions, gestures, behavior).

2. How can we recognize a stereotypic character? Find examples on the TV programs that you watch.

3. Read a book about someone who is not like TV characters who are portrayed in that group (i.e., a book about a female athlete) or about people you don't see on TV very often.

4. Draw a person in a nonstereotypic role.

5. Be a reporter: Interview 5- to 6-year-old children in your neighborhood. What do boys want to be when they grow up? What do girls want to be when they grow up?

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

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Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

Support for Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents

In 1992, the National Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice, sponsored a project to identify programs designed to help children and families of incarcerated mothers or fathers. The result of the project was *Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders.* The directory includes program descriptions and contact information for programs across the United States and Canada. The directory can be viewed on the World Wide Web at http://www.ifs.univie.ac.at/uncjin/mosaic/famcorr/fmcordir.html#california

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

National Library Week

Kids Connect @ the Library is the theme for this year's observance of National Library Week. Observed in April of each year, by proclamation of the President of the United States, National Library Week will take place during the week of April 13-19.

Across the country, schools are trying to take advantage of the World Wide Web (see *Net Day '97* in the March 1997 edition of *Parent News*) by providing hardware necessary for schools to connect to the Web. With the advent of computers, the increasing availability and affordability of educational and entertainment software, and the increasing use of the World Wide Web, public libraries offer many more information resources than has been true in the past.

For example, the Urbana Free Library, in Urbana, Illinois, is in the process of building a collection of educational CD-ROMs for children that will become part of their circulating collection. A public announcement about the collection will be made during National Library Week. The children's department currently has several computers with noncirculating CD-ROMs that may be used in-house by library patrons. Both the children's and adult's departments currently provide access to the World Wide Web (Barbara Linter, personal communication, 1997).

In honor of Kids Connect @ the Library, the American Library Association and Suave are sponsoring a contest in which a $20,000 prize for college expenses will be awarded.

To enter the contest, adults who are the parent or legal guardian of at least one child must write an essay (of 125 words or less) describing how they use the library to help their child. The essay must include at least one way in which parents use the library and its traditional or computer resources to encourage their child to read. Registration forms are available online at http://www.ala.org/KidsConnect/ or at your local library.

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Of Interest

If an Adolescent Begins to Fail in School, What Can Teachers and Parents Do?

by Anne S. Robertson

"How was school today?" Carol's mother asked tentatively. "Awful!" was the reply as Carol dropped her backpack in the middle of the kitchen floor and started stomping up the stairs to her bedroom. "It was the worst day ever. I don't know why you even bother to ask me!" Carol's mother sighed. She knew that the teen years would be difficult, but she really hoped that Carol would grow out of this phase soon.

Almost every child experiences a "phase" that is difficult for him or her in school. These periods may last several weeks and may include peer or social issues as well as a slide in academics. Research has also shown that problems are more likely to occur during a transitional year in school such as moving from middle school to high school (Pantleo, 1992). Some adolescents are able to get through this time with minimal assistance from their parents or teachers. It is enough for a parent to simply be available to listen to the child and suggest coping strategies, provide a supportive home environment, or encourage the child's participation in school activities. However, there are times when this phase lasts longer than expected and is linked to an emerging pattern of poor school performance or extreme behaviors.

In some cases, this "at-risk" pattern begins to emerge by the 5th or 6th grade (O'Sullivan, 1989). To intervene effectively, parents and teachers should be aware of some indicators of an adolescent at risk for school failure, including:

- Multiple retentions in grade—the student has been retained one or more years.
- Poor grades—the student consistently performs at average or below average levels.
- Absenteeism—the student is absent five or more days per term.
- Lack of connection with the school—the student is not involved in sports, music, or other school-related activities.
- Behavior problems—the student may be frequently disciplined or show a sudden change in school behavior, such as withdrawing from class discussions.
- Lack of confidence—the student believes that he or she cannot change the situation.
- Limited goals for the future—the student seems unaware of career options available or how to obtain those goals.

When one or more of these indicators becomes apparent in a student, he or she will likely need more assistance from both parents and teachers to successfully complete his or her educational experience. Stepping back and letting these students "figure it out" or "take responsibility for their own learning" may lead to a deeper cycle of failure within the school environment. Also, when students were asked to evaluate their transitional years, they indicated that they wanted to connect to their new school and that they needed more information about extracurricular activities, careers, class schedules, and study skills (Pantleo, 1992, p. 31). It may also come as a surprise to many adults that adolescents wanted more time with their teachers. This finding contradicts some of the popular media messages that youth do not want adult supervision or input.

To reduce these failure rates, Pantleo and others suggest that schools can implement a number of strategies, particularly during the years when students are making the transition from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school. The first steps are to enhance the school environment and to improve communication between schools, such as between the middle school and the high school. This strategy will also increase awareness of the problem. When the staff at all schools work together, they help provide a continuum of instruction for the students. Other ideas that can assist at the school level include:

- A study skills program--students begin the year before transition and continue the program at the new school.
- A shadow day--students link with an older student and shadow him or her throughout the school day.
- An extracurricular day--students are informed and encouraged to sign up for sports, music, drama, and related clubs.
- Peer leaders--students are linked during the first year with a peer leader who meets with the younger student several times a year for academic or social support.

Pantleo found that when students participated in all four of these programs and received more peer visits, there was a greater likelihood of school success (Pantleo, 1992, p. iv). Other programs that increase student success rates focus on increasing the personal attention that a student receives within the school environment such as advisor/advisee programs, after-school tutoring, small cooperative study groups that meet daily, and using specialists to support students with unique learning needs.

Parents may feel uncertain about how to approach their adolescent or the school if it appears that their teen is having difficulty. However, it is important to remember that teens need their parents to continue to advocate for them as well as to set appropriate expectations and boundaries. When their adolescent is having difficulty, parents can assist by:

- making the time to listen to the teen and understand his or her fears or concerns;
- encouraging the teen to participate in one or more school activities;
- attending school functions, sports, and plays;
- meeting with the teen's teachers and school counselor, asking them how they can support the learning environment and sharing their expectations for their child's future;
- seeking tutoring or study group support for the teen from the school or the community through the local YMCA, college, or university;
- working at providing a supportive home environment with clear expectations;
- talking with the teen about career options, visiting local colleges, and picking up information on careers and courses;
- encouraging the teen to volunteer in the community and to participate in community groups such as the YMCA, Scouting, 4-H, religious organizations, or other service-oriented groups to provide an out-of-school support system.

Above all, parents need to persevere. The teen years do pass, and most adolescents survive them, in spite of bumps along the way. Many schools and communities have support systems for teens and families who are having difficulty. It is important to reach out and ask for help before a "phase" develops into a more serious situation.

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for March 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

Child Development and Family Life Publications

The New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service has developed a variety of "family friendly" guides on several issues that families frequently face. The documents are short and concise, and many of them have been translated into both English and Spanish. Topics include:

- When the New Baby Arrives
- Guiding Young Children
- Toilet Training for Toddlers
- Helping Children Go to Bed
- Temper Tantrums
- Showing Love to Your Child
- Listening Is Important
- Helping Children Cope with Anger

For more information on these and other topics please contact:

Bulletin Office
Department of Agricultural Communications
New Mexico State University--Box 3AI
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Taylor, Barbara Lynn. (July 1996). ***Successful Parenting. The Single Parent Family: A Challenge for Parents. Facilitator's Guide. Part Seven.***

This video resource, intended for parent educators, outlines a workshop for single parents to help them meet the challenges of raising children alone. The guide first presents frameworks for a 1- or 2-hour workshop and for an 8-session workshop. The remainder of the guide corresponds to a 28-minute companion video, presenting questions for discussion prior to and after viewing the video, and discussion points geared to specific parts of the video. Topics covered are: (1) ways single families happen; (2) problems found in each single-family situation; (3) suggestions for parents who are separated or divorced; (4) some serious problems for divorced or separated parents; (5) problems divorced people have that go beyond their role as parents; (6) ideas that should help noncustodial parents; (7) problems common to most single parents, regardless of their circumstances; (8) parenting practices all parents should keep in mind; (9) dating; (10) remarriage; (11) advantages of being a single parent; (12) what makes a single parent home hard for the children; (13) what kids miss by not living with the other parent too; (14) how single-parent children sometimes feel; (15) research comparing children from single-parent families to those from two-parent families; and (16) advice from the single parents appearing in the video. A personal plan worksheet and workshop handouts are appended. ($39.95) PS024806

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Fax: 910-712-0030

Ready to Learn Service

PTV, the Ready to Learn Service on PBS, provides a variety of age-appropriate educational materials designed for parents, teachers, and child care providers to use with related PBS television series. Most of the activities encourage reading and literacy skills and are tied into related books. Some of the included shows are *Bill Nye the Science Guy, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, The Magic School Bus, Lamb Chop's Play-Along, Reading Rainbow*, and more.

The Ready to Learn Service on PBS
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314-1698
Telephone: 703-739-5000

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Boland, Pat, & Simmonds, Audrey. (1996). ***Latchkey Children: Are They Prepared for Self-Care.***

Although children left at home without adult supervision may function very well, studies have shown potential problems with self-care and latchkey children. This study investigated the attitudes of 30 employed parents in New York whose first- or third-grade children were regularly left home alone after school. The 20-question survey covered such areas as parents' perceptions of their children's ability to take care of themselves, use of older siblings as caregivers, activities the child was allowed to engage in while home alone (such as television viewing or playing outside), availability of outside help in case of emergency, satisfaction with the latchkey arrangement, and opinions on after-school programs. Results indicated that while most parents perceived child self-care as a positive experience for their children, most felt guilty, concerned, or ambivalent about leaving their children home alone. Respondents were also dissatisfied with the local school-based after-school program. In terms of common activities while home alone, most children were not allowed outside but were allowed to watch television for entertainment. (The report concludes with a discussion of important aspects of a positive after-school program. Contains 8 references.) PS025035

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2. ***The Case for Kids. Community Strategies for Children and Families: Promoting Positive Outcomes.*** **(Feb. 1996). Carter Center Mental Health Program, One Copenhill, Atlanta, GA 30307 (free).**

Why, despite our common understanding of the problems of children, have we failed to act decisively and powerfully to bring them security and hope? This report, which includes articles excerpted and adapted from presentations and discussions at a 1996 symposium, addresses this question. After an introduction by Rosalynn Carter, the first article (Bruner) presents the symposium's vision for children, families, and neighborhoods that requires new forms of family supportive front-line practice; reconstructing public systems to embrace new principles; building social capital through collective action; and creating economic opportunity and hope. The second article (Gates) suggests that "resiliency"--as a concept and goal--may be the easy-to-understand rubric needed to bring programs for children and families to scale. The third article (Farrow) makes the case for neighborhood networks of family support, based on the premise that conditions will not improve for many families unless they receive the help they need closer to home. The fourth article (Friedman) notes the need for "leadership teams," people who can transcend an individual vision and work together over the long term to create and sustain meaningful change. The report concludes with a summary of group discussion at the symposium, particularly the need for cultural sensitivity, and of "next steps" in implementing the symposium's vision. Contains a list of symposium participants and sponsors. PS025009

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3. Heacox, Diane. (1991). ***Up from Under-Achievement: How Teachers, Students, and Parents Can Work Together to Promote Student Success.*** **Free Spirit, 400 First Ave. North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1991 ($14.95).**

Not all children can or should be straight-A students because everyone differs in their abilities and interests, but all children have the potential to learn and to personally succeed in school. This guide describes a step-by-step program for intervening with students who are underachievers and for promoting student success. The guide provides teachers and parents with specific ways to support achievement and provide a positive learning environment, while providing students with specific ways to set goals, manage their work, develop good study habits, and boost their own self-esteem. Following an introduction to the characteristics of underachievement and information on using the guide for both underachievers and those achieving to their potential, the guide approaches its subject from a sports perspective with the following sections: (1) "The Players" (types of underachievers); (2) "The Coaches" (teachers and parents); (3) "The Strategy Sessions" (divided into a student self-assessment, student and parent interviews, teacher conference, and an action plan); (4) "Success Boosters" (learning, developing study habits, managing school work, setting goals, and dealing with personal issues); (5) "The Contract" (between student, teachers, and parents, and including the handling of reluctant players); and (6) "Resources" (forms and student work plans). The text is divided according to the target audience (parents, teachers, or students). PS024890

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4. Barclay, Kathy, & Boone, Elizabeth. (1996). ***The Parent Difference: Uniting School, Family, and Community*. Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc., 2626 South Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005; telephone: 800-348-4474; fax: 847-290-6609 (Item No. 1467, $29.95).**

Establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with families and members of the community are among the most challenging tasks facing educators today. This book explores why these partnerships are difficult to create and how they can be established. The book attempts to help educators understand that they have little control over changing the attitudes and actions of family members and community members until they first address the negative attitudes that prevail among many school staffs. The chapters in the guide are: (1) "Beyond Open Houses, Fund Raisers, and Room Mothers: What Research Tells Us about Parent Involvement"; (2) "Barriers to Involvement"; (3) "Sharing Policies and Procedures: Creating an Effective School Handbook"; (4) "Read All about It! Creating Effective Written Communications for Classrooms and Schools"; (5) "Getting to Know You…Open Houses and Parent Programs"; (6) "Planning and Delivering and Effective Parent Education Program"; (7) "The 'Whys' and 'Hows' of Home Visiting"; (8) "Assessment and the Reporting of Pupil Progress"; (9) "Planning and Implementing Effective Parent Conferences"; (10) "Getting Parents and Community Members Involved: Keys to an Effective Volunteer Program"; (11) "School-Community Partnerships: Fostering Positive Public Relations"; (12) "Empowering Parents to Serve as Advocates for the Education of Their Children"; and (13) "Building a Comprehensive Plan for Family and Community Involvement." Two appendices list suggested books and print resources for a parent library, and videotapes for parent education. PS024934

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5. Prestine, Joan Singleton. (1997). ***Helping Children Cope with Moving: A Practical Resource Guide for "Moving is Hard."* Fearon Teacher Aids, 299 Jefferson Rd., P.O. Box 480, Parsippany, NJ 07054-0480.**

About one in five Americans moves each year, and often children find such moves emotionally difficult. This book is a guide to help adults assist young children in understanding and dealing with the emotions that arise from moving to a new home. Intended for use with the picture book *Moving Is Hard*, this resource provides suggestions and activities for communicating with children, recognizing their feelings, involving them in the move, and helping them adjust to their new home. Individual sections deal with talking about moving; responding to feelings; using the resource guide; saying goodbye to school, friends, and home; understanding denial, fear, withdrawal, loneliness, and anger; and methods for easing the transition to a new school, new friends, and a new home. A section on additional resources lists relevant books for adults and children, as well as the names and addresses of relevant support groups. PS024893

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.

The Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc., is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to helping mothers enjoy a relaxed and happy relationship with their babies. The organization provides hospital in-service programs for new mothers, printed material, supplies, and one-to-one counseling by women who have nursed a baby for at least six months.

Contact:

Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.
P.O. Box 50063
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Telephone: 415-599-3669

National Association for Visually Handicapped

The National Association for Visually Handicapped is a private, nonprofit organization serving visually impaired--not totally blind--children, their parents, and professionals who work with them, as well as adults with vision loss. The organization provides large-print visual aids, a newsletter, and brochures with information about commercially manufactured optical aides.

Contact:

National Association for Visually Handicapped
22 West 21st St.
New York, NY 10010
Telephone: 212-889-3141
Fax: 212-727-2931

The Group B Strep Association

The Group B Strep Association is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to create public awareness of Group B Strep (GBS) disease, to bring about guidelines for the testing and treatment of GBS, and to generate support for vaccine research. Group B Streptococcus (GBS) is a bacteria normally found in the vagina and/or lower intestine of 15 to 35 percent of all healthy, adult women. GBS can be passed to an infant *in utero* or during labor. Approximately 12,000 infants in the United States are infected with GBS each year. It causes an estimated 2,000 infant deaths per year and leaves other infants with mental and/or physical handicaps. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends pregnant women be screened for GBS bacteria between the 26th and 28th weeks of pregnancy. Transmission of GBS to infants can be prevented through various antibiotic treatments.

Contact:

The Group B Strep Association
P.O. Box 16515
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
Telephone: 919-932-5344

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

This national organization, run by parents, focuses on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders, and their families. The Federation has state organizations and chapters, publishes fact sheets and other literature related to children's mental health, sponsors an annual conference, and publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Claiming Children.*

Contact:

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
1021 Prince St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971
Telephone: 703-684-7710
Fax: 703-836-1040

Partnership 2000 Schools

The National Network of Partnership 2000 Schools was established in 1996 at Johns Hopkins University by the Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning. The goal is to bring together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining strong school-family-community partnerships. There is no fee to join the Network, but schools, districts, and states must meet a few requirements.

Contact:

Joyce Epstein
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
3505 North Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
URL: http://scov.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/p2000.html

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

Army Families

Published quarterly by the Family Liaison Office, *Army Families* is distributed world-wide by Army exchanges, commissaries, medical facilities, and other family-oriented facilities. The newsletter contains a variety of articles including college tuition assistance, family support information, family health, and consumer updates.

Army Family Liaison Office
DIAM-ZAF, Room 2D665
Asst. Chief of Staff Installation Mgmt.
Washington, DC 20310-0600
Telephone: 703-695-7714

Baseball Parent: For Parents of Youth Baseball Players

Providing a variety of information for the youth league baseball coach or parent that is interested in Little League, *Baseball Parent* is published six times a year. Articles provide college scholarship information for high school players, organizational information, skill development, and a calendar of baseball schools and camps as well as related events. (Subscriptions are $29.95.)

Baseball Parent
4437 Kingston Pike #2204
Knoxville, TN 37919-5226
Telephone: 423-523-1274

Parenting Education Network News

This new publication provides information for those professionals who are involved with parenting education. The stated purpose is "to provide individuals involved in parenting education with . . . information to grow professionally and . . . the opportunity to share issues and ideas so we together can shape and advance the field of parenting education." The current issue provides background on parent education, important aspects of parenting groups, parental beliefs, and a book review. (4 issues per year; $45.00.)

Parenting Press
P.O. Box 75267
Seattle, WA 98125
Telephone: 800-992-6657

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Sponsor: Coalition for America's Children

Description: ZERO TO THREE fosters a network of people around the country who are concerned about the needs of infants, toddlers, and families. It also functions as an Early Head Start National Resource Center and develops and conducts training for the birth to 3 programs that are part of Head Start. The ZERO TO THREE site describes issues and programs and provides resources, suggestions, and a contact list.

Address: http://www.usakids.org/sites/z3.html

Name: Canadian Council on Social Development

Description: The Canadian Council on Social Development is an independent, national, nonprofit organization embracing all aspects of social policy and development. The council pursues a commitment to social progress through research and analysis, consultation, public education, policy development, and advocacy. Features of the site include (1) listings of publications and online documents, (2) membership information, (3) social indicators, (4) research services, and (5) statistics and information.

Address: http://www.achilles.net/~council/pcccomm.html

Name: Child & Family Canada

Description: Child & Family Canada is committed to the health and well-being of children and their families. Articles, resources, and organizations are provided on the following topics: child care, child development, parenting, health, safety, literacy, nutrition, physical activities, play, family life, adolescence, learning activities, social issues, and special needs. Information is available in English and French.

Address: http://cfc.cymbiont.ca/

Name: Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center

Description: The Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC) was created to help families and schools work better together to ensure that children succeed in school. CPIRC is a network of statewide organizations and six community agencies representing urban and rural communities working together to (1) provide parents with information and resources to support them in their efforts to raise healthy, happy, and successful children; (2) increase parent participation in schools by helping parents develop their leadership skills and preparing educators for parent involvement in their classrooms; and (3) create a statewide, long-term plan for financing parent involvement and support programs. The site contains (1) information for parents on how to be effectively involved in child development and education, (2) tips for educators on how to include parents in their classrooms, (3) training resources, (4) research on parent involvement, (5) parent interventions, (6) a calendar of events, and (7) links to related sites.

Address: http://www.cpirc.org/

Name: Kids Connect

Sponsor: American Library Association

Description: This part of the American Library Association Web site is devoted to parents and children. It includes the following sections: (1) Tips for Parents, which includes articles that describe the many different ways children can use the library; "How to Raise a Reader" (broken down into age stages), an article suggesting how parents can be informed about what their children are reading; and a lengthy bibliography of books broken down by age; (2) Log on @ the Library, which includes information for parents on keeping kids safe as they use the computer services at the library, in addition to links to useful Web sites and a list of resources; (3) National Library Week, which includes a description of a contest and informs parents that libraries across the country will be sponsoring special activities for library week (April 13-19); and (4) Supporting Your Library, which describes ways parents can be actively involved at the library. It includes fact sheets about public and school libraries across the country.

Address: http://www.ssdesign.com/ALAkids/

Name: KidsHealth

Sponsor: duPont Hospital for Children, Nemours Foundation

Description: KidsHealth bills itself as a "mighty Web site" devoted to the health of children and teens. It offers in-depth articles (written by medical experts) about a wide array of health issues, including growth, food and fitness, childhood diseases and infections, immunizations, lab tests, medical and surgical conditions, and the latest developments in medical treatments. The site is arranged in three categories: Kids, Parents, and Professionals. Articles are specifically written for these audiences.

Address: http://kidshealth.org

Name: Parenting Pipeline

Sponsor: North Dakota State University Extension Service

Description: Parenting Pipeline contains parenting resources, including a Parent Line (800-258-0808) and newsletters for (1) Parents of Preschoolers, (2) Parents of Kindergarteners, (3) Parents of 2nd Graders, (4) Parents of 4th Graders, (5) Parents of 6th Graders, and (6) Parents of Teenagers.

Address: http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extnews/pipeline/

Name: Single Rose--Resource for Single Mothers

Description: Single Rose is an online resource for single mothers. Single Rose provides articles on the issues that single mothers raising children alone (divorced, widowed, or unmarried) face, such as divorce recovery, dealing with anger, child support, and custody issues. Articles are written by psychologists, lawyers, doctors, and other single mothers, often with vignettes that illustrate the point of the article.

Address: http://www.speedsoft.com/rose/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for April 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Discovery Network will be rebroadcasting the Department of Education's Satellite Town Meetings, starting February 28, 1997, on The Learning Channel. The Town Meetings will air monthly on Fridays from 11 am to 12 noon (ET) as part of an ongoing series to explore how schools across the country are coping with challenges and finding solutions.

The schedule of rebroadcasts of the Satellite Town Meetings on the Learning Channel is below:

Friday, February 28, 1997

"New American High Schools: Preparing Youth for College and Careers"

Friday, March 28, 1997

"Making College More Accessible"

Friday, April 25, 1997

"School-to-Work Opportunities: Workplaces as Learning Environments"

Friday, May 23, 1997

"Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, and Other Choices in Public Education"

Friday, June 27, 1997

"Becoming a Reading, Literate Society"

Friday, July 4, 1997

"Ready to Learn: Preparing Young Children for School Success"

April 13-19, 1997, is the Week of the Young Child, which is the annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to support the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

For more information, contact:

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 16th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426
Telephone: 202-232-8777, 800-424-2460
Fax: 202-328-1846
Email: pubaff@naeyc.org
URL: http://www.america-tomorrow.com/naeyc/woyc.htm

NetDay is approaching quickly. This year's NetDay is scheduled for April 19, 1997. NetDay is a grass roots volunteer effort to wire K-12 schools so they can network their computers and connect them to the Internet. Labor and materials are provided by volunteers and support from companies, unions, parents, teachers, students, and school employees.

To participate in NetDay, you can:

1. Volunteer--Pick a school and volunteer to install and test the school's wiring infrastructure.
2. Become a School Organizer--Organize NetDay in a local school and recruit volunteers. You can also rally the community behind NetDay and find local companies to sponsor a school.
3. Become a Sponsor--As a sponsor, you can provide trained staff to support NetDay planning and design, funding to purchase wiring kits for schools, tools and equipment to complete NetDay installation, training of volunteers , and encouragement of employee involvement with a local school through NetDay.

For more information, call 800-55-NET96 or visit the NetDay Web site:

URL: http://www.netday96.com/

The Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is dedicated to focusing public attention on the rights and needs of young children from birth through age 8. The event is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and its local affiliates. This year, WOYC will be April 13, 1997 through April 19, 1997, and the theme is "Early Years Are Learning Years--Make Them Count."

For more information:

Chicago Metro AEYC
410 South Michigan Ave., Suite 525
Chicago, IL 60605
Telephone: 312-427-5399

April 20-26, 1997, is National Science & Technology Week '97 (NSTW '97). This year's theme is "Webs, Wires, and Waves: The Science and Technology of Communications," in recognition of the priceless impact that communications and related new technologies have had in shrinking the world and bringing people around the world closer together. A major objective of NSTW '97 is to enlighten children and adults about the importance of science and engineering through hands-on learning activities and events.

On Wednesday, April 23, an Ask-NSTW hotline will be available for kids, parents, teachers, or anyone with a science or engineering-related question to get advice from a scientist or engineer on how to find the answer. The hotline number is 800-682-2716. For the whole week (April 20-26), you can also email your questions to asknstw@nsf.gov.

For more information, contact:

NSTW
c/o National Science Foundation
Room 1245
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230

URL: http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nstw/start.htm

Thursday, April 24, 1997, is Take Your Daughters to Work Day. The theme for this year is "Five Years of Work Towards a Lifetime of Confidence." This theme is intended to focus attention on how mentoring relationships and exposure to the work world help girls maintain their confidence and resilience during adolescence.

Take Your Daughters to Work Day is the annual public education program sponsored by the Ms. Foundation for Women, which was created five years ago. It began in response to research findings on the adolescent development of girls that indicated that during adolescence girls often receive less attention than boys in school and in youth-serving programs, suffer from lower expectations than boys, and tend to like or dislike themselves based on aspects of their physical appearances.

If you are wondering "What about the Boys," you can visit the Take Your Daughters to Work Day home page, which explains the focus on girls as well as provides suggestions for boys and fathers on that day. These suggestions include lesson plans designed to be used in the classroom while girls are at work and inviting men to come speak with boys in classrooms. The page also provides a list of men's and fathering organizations that may provide useful resources.

For more information, contact:

Ms. Foundation for Women
120 Wall St., 33rd floor
New York, NY 10005
Telephone: 212-742-2300
Fax: 212-742-1531
Email: todtwcom@ms.foundation.org

CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE: The Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children

Date: April 16-19, 1997

Place: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Description: The Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children presents the 1997 Early Childhood Conference.

Contact:

AEYC Conference Registration
1302 Blanchard Ave.
Flint, MI 48503
Telephone: 888-666-2392

CONFERENCE: Our Village, Our Children, Ourselves

Date: April 17-19, 1997

Place: Philadelphia, PA

Description: Educating Children for Parenting is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to use the examination of the parent-child relationship to engage young children in a process that leads them to an understanding of their responsibility to be caring individuals today and nurturing adults tomorrow.

Contact:

Jacquelynn Puriefoy-Brinkley
Chief Executive Officer
Telephone: (215) 496-9780

CONFERENCE: Exchanging Seeds and Cultivating the Field

Date: April 17-20, 1997

Place: Atlanta, Georgia

Description: This is the 20th Annual Save the Children Family Child Care Conference and offers state-of-the-art practice, latest research, and policy issues that affect family child care. The conference is aimed at family child care providers.

Contact:

For a registration brochure, call 404-885-1578, ext. 226.

CONFERENCE: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)

Date: April 16-19, 1997

Place: Omni-Sheraton Hotel; Washington, DC

Description: The NCCCC conference features daily keynote speakers, tours of campus children's centers, a workshop track for new directors, and training for people interested in lobbying for change in Washington, DC. A special track for teachers will also be available.

Contact:

Gail Solit
Gallaudet University
Telephone: 202-651-5130
Fax: 202-651-5531
Email: gasolit@gallua.gallaudet.edu

CONFERENCE: National School-Age Care Association Conference

Date: April 17-19, 1997

Place: Orlando, FL

Description: Master the MAGIC (Making a Genuine Impact on Children) of the 1997 National School-Age Care Association Conference.

Contact:

Florida School Age Child Care Coalition
PO Box 348
Christmas, FL 32709-0348
Telephone: 407-568-6497

CONFERENCE: Family Literacy: The Power and the Promise

Date: April 20-22, 1997

Place: Louisville, Kentucky

Description: This is the Sixth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy presented by the National Center for Family Literacy. Sessions will include such topics as what the future holds and family literacy's place in it; welfare reform and how it will affect family literacy programs; and the top thinkers in family literacy.

Contact:

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza
325 W. Main St., Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Telephone: 502-584-1133

CONFERENCE: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) "La Semana del Nino (Week of the Young Child)" Educator's Institute

Date: April 22-24, 1997

Place: Omni Hotel; San Antonio, Texas

Description: The Fourth Annual IDRA early childhood education training institute. Featured topics include: restructuring for success, multi-age practices, the role of play in early childhood, and involving parents.

Contact:

Hilaria Bauer or Carol Chavez
Telephone: 210-684-8180

CONFERENCE: The Conference Board's 1997 Business and Education Conference

Date: May 15-16, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: Leading educators and employers from across the country will examine how to strengthen school-business partnerships that promote family involvement in education at the Conference Board's 1997 Business and Education Conference. The theme of this year's conference is "Better Education Is Everybody's Business." U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley will give a progress report on the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. The conference will feature speakers from leading organizations involved in improving the quality of education, and the Conference Board will announce its "Best in Class" Awards at a luncheon.

Contact:

The Conference Board's Customer Service Department
Telephone: 212-339-0345
Fax: 212-980-7014
Email: orders@conference-board.org

CONFERENCE: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities

Date: May 18-20, 1997

Place: Biscayne Bay Hotel; Miami, Florida

Description: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities is intended to provide a forum on best appropriate practices and services for all children and families; to build communities that value and support the diversity of families and caregivers in the nurturing of young children; to present innovation, leadership, and effective collaboration in working with and on behalf of children and families; and to showcase the most effective and highest quality services and programs for children and families.

Contact:

Luis Hernandez
Telephone: 305-375-4670

CONFERENCE: National Head Start Association

Date: May 28-31, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: This is the Annual Conference of the National Head Start Association.

Contact:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St., Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-0875

CONFERENCE: Families, Technology, and Education Conference

Date: October 30-November 1, 1997

Place: Itasca, Illinois

Description: Just as the automobile changed family life and expectations, creating not only new opportunities but also unexpected challenges, so are new electronic technologies changing the ways we raise and educate our children. This conference will provide opportunities to reflect on the nature of current and emerging technologies and on the ways they affect family life and the education of children. The impact of the Internet, new telephone technologies, television, and other media will be the focus of discussions. Presenters at the conference will include technology experts, policymakers, program planners, educators, parents, and parenting professionals. The conference is intended to address the needs of many types of professionals who work with families, including family support personnel, educators, corporate executives, media specialists, librarians, health care specialists, publishers, and information systems developers. The conference will provide attendees with an increased awareness of the technologies available to children, families, and communities, an increased awareness of how to use technologies to serve their communities, and opportunities to interact with leaders, colleagues, and parents in order to better understand the impact of technology on family culture and children's education.

Contact:

Anne S. Robertson, Program Chair
National Parent Information Network
ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty DriveChampaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 800-583-4135
Email: arobrtsn@uiuc.edu
URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/fte/papers.html

Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for May 1997

Volume 3, Number 5

- What's New on NPIN

- May's Feature:
  Displaced and Unaccompanied Children: Understanding this International Problem
  by Anne S. Robertson

- Community Spotlight:
  Mother's Day Special: Programs Developed by Mothers Who Care

- Of Interest
    - *Understanding Reading and Writing Acquisition While Holding Standards High*by Jean Robbins
    - *Latchkey Children* by Debbie Reese
    - *Directory of Hotline and Online Services for Parents*by Dawn Ramsburg
    - *Children's Books*
    - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
    - *Family Literacy and Reading in the Summer Months*
    - *Preparing for Summer Activities: Suggested Activities and Safety Guidelines*by Dawn Ramsburg
    - *Update on Early Childhood Events and Resources* by Dawn Ramsburg

- Resources for Parents
    - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
    - Book Summaries and Reviews
    - Organizations
    - Newsletters/Magazines
    - Web Sites

- The Parenting Calendar

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Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for April 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during April 1997

NPIN now has a search feature by which you can search for words in the full text of any document on NPIN. To use the search feature, return to the NPIN Home Page and choose *Search NPIN* from the menu.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Helping Children Learn at Home section, the following items have been added:

- *Cómo ayudar a sus hijos a usar la biblioteca*
  This Spanish brochure offers tips about getting children interested in the library and about visiting the library. The brochure provides information about library services, servcies for special children, and adult services.
- *Helping Your Child Get Ready for School*
  This publication discusses the importance of learning before in the preschool years, with information on how to prepare a child for school. The publication contains an extensive section of activities for children ages birth to 5 years, as well as a section on kindergarten. Appendices include "Good Television Habits," "Choosing Child Care," and the "Ready-for-School Checklist."
- *Helping Your Child Learn Geography*
  This publication includes extensive materials, resources, and activities for five learning areas within geography. The book also includes links to many related web sites, a section of free or inexpensive materials, references and books, as well as a glossary of geographical terms, incorporated into the activities and lessons.
- *Helping Your Child Learn Math*
  This publication includes the basics of learning math, as well as three sections of various activities to help children learn math. Appendices include "Parents and the Schools," "What Should I Expect from a Math Program," and "Resources."
- *Helping Your Child Learn Responsible Behavior*
  This publication contains four sections intended to help children teach responsible behavior to their children. These sections are: (1) What Do We Mean By Responsibility? (2) How Can Parents Encourage Responsible Behavior? (3) Activities; and (4) Parents and the Schools. A selected bibliography is also included.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following items have been added:

- *Breastfeeding Support at the Workplace Can Have Bottom Line Impact*
  Many mothers who return to work following a birth desire to continue to breastfeed their babies. This article discusses the research into workplace support of breastfeeding and potential impacts of programs which would allow mothers to breastfeed. Many companies are implementing such programs, with several apparent benefits resulting.
- *The Debate Over Spanking*
  This ERIC/EECE digest, written by Dawn Ramsburg, discusses research on the possible reasons for spanking, as well as the effectiveness of spanking. Alternatives to spanking and suggestions for parents of infants, toddlers, and older children are also addressed.
- *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity -- Building on America's Strengths*
  This publication addresses the issue of linguistic and cultural diversity in today's society. The issue of teaching children whose native language is not English is discussed. Recommendations for working with children and families with linguistic and cultural differences are also included.
- *A New Corporate Strategy: Promoting Healthy Babies before Conception*
  More and more businesses are becoming involved in their employees' preconception and prenatal planning. The value and benefits of such programs are discussed in this article, as well as a review of sample programs which offer such services as classes, on-duty professionals, and health regimes.

In the Early Childhood - Learning section, the following items have been added:

- *Toys: Tools for Learning*
  This publication outlines the importance of toys in a child's cognitive, social, and physical development. Characterics of good toys are listed and a discussion of how to choose appropriate toys is included. The importance of parental involvement is underscored.
- *Linguistic and Cultural Diversity -- Building on America's Strengths*
  This publication addresses the issue of linguistic and cultural diversity in today's society. The issue of teaching children whose native language is not English is discussed. Recommendations for working with children and families with linguistic and cultural differences are also included.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following items have been added:

- *Children's Illnesses and Child Care*
  This publication addresses the care of children with mild illnesses in the child care setting, as well as policies regarding inclusion/exclusion of ill children. Tips for parents as well as child care facilities are included, as well as resources and contact information.

In the Children's Health and Nutrition section, the following items have been added:

- *Breastfeeding Support at the Workplace Can Have Bottom Line Impact*
  Many mothers who return to work following a birth desire to continue to breastfeed their babies. This article discusses the research into workplace support of breastfeeding and potential impacts of programs which would allow mothers to breastfeed. Many companies are implementing such programs, with several apparent benefits resulting.
- *Children's Illnesses and Child Care*
  This publication addresses the care of children with mild illnesses in the child care setting, as well as policies regarding inclusion/exclusion of ill children. Tips for parents as well as child care facilities are included, as well as resources and contact information.
- *Helping Your Child Be Healthy and Fit*
  This publication includes ways in which parents can help their children learn how to grow up healthy. The book also has activities that help children understand their emotions and build

self-esteem; eat the right foods; prevent disease; and build strong bodies. Finally, the publication includes safety tips, ways to help children say "no" to drugs, a section on parents and the schools, a bibliography, and a vaccination chart to help keep track of children's vaccinations.

- *A New Corporate Strategy: Promoting Healthy Babies before Conception*
  More and more businesses are becoming involved in their employees' preconception and prenatal planning. The value and benefits of such programs are discussed in this article, as well as a review of sample programs which offer such services as classes, on-duty professionals, and health regimes.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Latchkey Children: Are They Prepared for Self-Care* by Pat Boland and Audrey Simmonds
- *The Case for Kids. Community Strategies for Children and Families: Promoting Positive Outcomes.* from the Carter Center Mental Health Program.
- *Up from Under-Achievement: How Teachers, Students, and Parents Can Work Together to Promote Students Success.* by Diane Heacox
- *The Parent Difference: Uniting School, Family, and Community.* by Kathy Barclay and Elizabeth Boone.
- Helping Children Cope with Moving: A Practical Resource Guide for "Moving is Hard." by Joan Singleton Prestine.

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Army Families*
- *Baseball Parent: For Parents of Youth Baseball Players*
- *Parenting Education Network News*

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Nursing Mother's Counsel, Inc.
- National Association for Visually Handicapped
- The Group B Strep Association
- Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- Partnership 2000 Schools

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Parent News for May 1997

May's Feature

Displaced and Unaccompanied Children: Understanding this International Problem

by Anne S. Robertson

Introduction

Some of the questions we receive through our Parents AskERIC service are related to adoption. They might be requests for information on adoption support organizations or perhaps questions about learning issues that affect children who have been displaced from their biological families. There are many children both in the United States and internationally in need of a permanent family, and as concerned parents, and as a society, it is important that we understand this problem while developing ways to support the healthy development of all children in our society. May's feature article looks at the issue of unaccompanied and displaced children and provides more resources for interested parents and professionals. The Community Spotlight highlights two programs that have been developed to serve the needs of displaced children.

In 1995, an estimated one million American children were displaced from their families (McKelvey & Stevens, 1994, p. 10). They may be found in foster care, detention centers, hospitals, residential and therapeutic homes, a friend's home, or on the streets. Internationally, the United Nations estimates that, of the 18 million refugees, 80% are women and children ("Families Who Flee," 1993, p. 1). While exact numbers are difficult to track, it is estimated that 50% of these refugees are without the support of a parent or relative and are without any consistent international policy for their protection.

Frequently called "forgotten," "throwaway," "abandoned," "orphaned," or "street children," these names elicit strong sentiment but do little to address the international magnitude of the problem. Ressler, Boothby, and Steinbock (1988), during their work with refugees, defined this population as "unaccompanied children" or "a person who is under the age of majority and not accompanied by parent or legal guardian, or another person who by law or custom is responsible for him or her" (p. 7).

Historically, there has always been a population of unaccompanied children. They were usually children who were orphaned due to war, plague, or disaster. Statistics about family separations have been available only since World War II, when estimates for the entire number of abandoned or homeless children were as high as 13,000,000 (Ressler et al., 1988, pp. 9-12). Block and Drucker (1992) in their book *Rescuers* portray the courage of many families throughout Europe who, at risk to their own safety, sheltered Jewish children during this treacherous time. Any provision that was made for these children was done by extended family, the local community, or by an "underground network." As might be expected, some communities supported and protected children more competently than others.

It was often the religious organizations that absorbed the children when extended families or communities could not, or would not, accept the responsibility. These institutions may have included education for the children and were the forerunners of boarding schools and modern orphanages. The gradual introduction of laws, through charitable statutes, from the 1500s through the Reformation, showed the change in society's attitudes from a family focus to one where support for orphans and relief of poverty was developing into a local and national responsibility. The statutes also noted that some of these charitable institutions were diverting funds into uncharitable pockets and that laws were required to guard and protect the welfare of needy children (Jones, 1969, p. 22).

The first orphanage in the United States was established in 1729 to house the children of settlers killed by Indians (Shealy, 1995, p. 566). Contrary to popular belief, these early orphanages were often considered community resources where parents could leave their children temporarily if they were unable to care for them due to poverty or illness. The parents could return for the child when they were self-sufficient again (Laskas, 1994, p. 104).

The orphanage has continued as an institution used by society to care for needy children in much of the world. However, in America, reliance on this institutional approach began to change during the 1950s when researchers exposed the detrimental effects of institutionalized care (Van Biema, 1994, p. 59). Some of those effects included developmental delays, poor impulse control, poor concentration, and the possibility that a child suffering from long-term deprivation may be unable to form lasting attachments to others and to discriminate between right and wrong (Ressler et al., 1988, pp. 154-157).

Policy changes and practice followed this research. In 1980, the Federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act indicated that for the long-term care of displaced children "families were almost always preferable to institutions" (Van Biema, 1994, p. 59). The new goal was to make institutionalized stays brief, to place children with foster families, to try to reunify biological families, or to provide for permanency planning in a foster or adoptive family (Van Biema, 1994, p. 59). There is a similar recommendation for unaccompanied children in emergency situations that states: "Family care within the child's own community should be the first placement option considered" (Ressler et al., 1988, p. 312).

Today, children may be unaccompanied or displaced because of war, refugee movement, abandonment, abuse, or neglect. They may also be orphans or runaways. Regardless of the reason for their plight, the faster and more successfully we can meet the needs of this population, the more likely they are to develop into productive members of society. However, some experts in the child welfare field (McKelvey & Stevens, 1994, pp. 43, 80-81; Shealy, 1995, p. 566; Van Biema, 1994, p. 60) agree that effective delivery of services to these children has been hindered by several factors, including:

- *An increased population of displaced children.* Teen pregnancies, substance abuse, wars, the refugee movements, and the AIDS epidemic have created an unprecedented burden on social support systems in many parts of the world.
- *An increased population of children that are needy.* Effects of prenatal substance abuse, limited nutrition and inadequate care during early childhood, or being a witness to violent acts of war have affected many of the children available for adoption. Many need long-term therapeutic interventions--something a typical adoptive family may not be able to provide.
- *A deficit model that focuses on illness instead of prevention.* Annual averages for the cost of a child in group placement or long-term psychiatric treatment range from $22,400 to $103,000, and these costs may be reimbursed through health insurance. Although family preservation and foster care efforts cost between $2,800 and $5,000 per family, such efforts are unlikely to receive funding through insurance.

- *A lack of consensus among child welfare professionals about effective approaches for this current problem.* Some professionals feel that if foster and adoptive families were supported and compensated they could provide more effective support for needier children. Others believe that the typical foster family or family preservation model is unable to cope with the current influx of children.
- *Poor communication and lack of collaboration between programs and agencies.* Professional "turf" battles as well as lack of knowledge about the program or services that are available in an area complicate and undermine the support of individual children.

In spite of these barriers, there are a number of successful programs available to support needy children. One example is a therapeutic foster care program that provides extensive training to the foster family because the agency considers the family as part of the child's treatment team. In some areas, the family is provided with support by a 24-hour, on-call, parent supervisor. Other model programs include residential sites, such as the Nashua Children's Home in New Hampshire. Unlike other programs that may admit children from many different locations, the Nashua Children's Home restricts intake to children who reside within 30 miles of the home. This practice facilitates greater family involvement in the child's therapy. The treatment process also requires that one staff member be responsible for the child and that the majority of services being provided by the community. This approach has significantly increased their success rate with reunifying families and has reduced the average residential stay for each child.

Internationally, small nonprofit organizations and religious groups like AIDS Widows and Orphans Family Support (AWOFS) in Uganda also work to assist unaccompanied children and other AIDS victims in Africa. AWOF and similar groups are like "street-corner runts" (Balzar, 1995, p. A2) compared to the large international relief agencies such as World Vision or the International Rescue Committee. Father Collins, of AIDS Widows and Orphans Family Support, serves 640 families by providing a means for financial sustenance and a way to keep the remnants of a family together. He visits families weekly and helps them with small home businesses, growing their own food, or providing assistance where needed. Many of these families are headed by a teen who is the oldest child in the sibling group (Balzar, 1995, p. A2).

Even though there are a number of issues that are interwoven and complicating the development of programs such as the Nashua Children's Home or AWOFS, as concerned parents and child welfare professionals, we can investigate innovative solutions, along with foster parenting and adoption, so that all children within our society will have the support they need for healthy development.

For more information:

Miller, M., & Ward, N. (1996). *With eyes wide open: A workbook for parents adopting international children over age one.* Minneapolis, MN: LN Press.

Silber, K., & Martinez Dorner, P. (1989). *Children of open adoption and their families.* San Antonio, TX: Corona Publishing.

McKelvey, C. (1995). *Give them roots, then let them fly: Understanding attachment therapy.* The Attachment Center at Evergreen, P.O. Box 2764, Evergreen, CO 80437. Telephone: 303-674-1910
URL: http://www.attachmentcenter.org/

What you should know before you adopt a child. (1997). The Attachment Center at Evergreen, P.O. Box 2764, Evergreen, CO 80437. Telephone: 303-674-1910
URL: http://www.attachmentcenter.org/

Adoption Assistance Information & Support
This Web site provides adoption resources to everyone who is touched by adoption. The emphasis is on getting the adoption process started.
URL: http://www.adopting.org/

UNICEF: Unaccompanied children
This Web site gives a brief description of the issue of children who are unaccompanied due to war or refugee status.
URL: http://www.unicef.org/graca/alone.htm

Sources:

Balzar, John. (1995, November 23). In Africa, families orphaned by AIDS. *Boston Globe,* p. A2.

Block, Gay, & Drucker, Malker. (1992). *Rescuers: Portraits of moral courage in the holocaust.* New York: Holmes and Meier.

Families who flee. (1993, November). *1994 International Year of the Family.* New York: United Nations, p. 1.

Huntley Pesavento, Barbara. (1993, June). *Treatment considerations for refugee children: Learning from torture and abuse.* Paper presented at Harvard Medical School Dept. of Continuing Education Conference, Cambridge, MA.

Jones, G. (1969). *History of the law of charity 1532-1827.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Laskas, Jeanne Marie. (1994, November 1). Someone to watch over me. *Redbook, 184,* 104-107, 134-136.

McKelvey, Carole, & Stevens, JoEllen. (1994). *Adoption crisis: The truth behind adoption and foster care.* Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Ressler, Everett, Boothby, Neil, & Steinbock, Daniel. (1988). *Unaccompanied children: Care and protection in wars, natural disasters and refugee movements.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Shealy, Craig. (1995). From Boys Town to Oliver Twist: Separating fact from fiction in welfare reform and out-of home placement of children and youth. *American Psychologist, 50*(8), 555-580.

Van Biema, D. (1994, December 12). The storm over orphanages. *Time,* 58-62.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Community Spotlight

Mother's Day Special: Programs Developed by Mothers Who Care

During the month of May, we would like to honor some of the women who have reached into their local community to develop and implement programs that serve a greater need. As might be expected, the variety of the programs reflects the breadth of knowledge and abilities found in women around the world. In almost every situation, these programs were started by one person or a few persons who simply wanted to serve a need within their own community or to serve a specific population. Within every neighborhood, one can find people who are quietly working, in a small or large way, to have a positive impact on their community.

Cunningham Children's Home

One example of this type of program is the Cunningham Children's Home located in Urbana, Illinois. In 1894, the Cunningham's donated their home and 15 acres to the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Illinois Methodist Episcopal Church to provide a safe haven for abandoned and orphaned children. Over the years, the home has changed from an orphanage to a residential treatment facility where children live in small family-type housing, with specially trained house parents, and are involved with a number of outreach programs. These include a pregnant and parenting teen program and a community group home. There is also a school affiliated with the program to provide educational support for some of the children, while others attend the local public school. The residential school provides intensive educational services to bring students to grade level, as well as counseling for behavior issues.

At Cunningham, some children will return to their biological families, some may move to foster or adoptive families, while still others will move to apartments, jobs, or higher education. For the adolescents who will not be returning to a family unit, Cunningham has an outreach program that continues to provide support and assistance until the age of 21 years called Preparing for Adult Living (PAL). This program helps to protect adolescents and young adults from feeling abandoned and isolated during those formative years.

While Cunningham has gone through a variety of changes over the past century to continue to serve the needs of displaced children and families, the home remains under the stewardship and direction of the Central Illinois Conference of United Methodist Women. For more information about the Cunningham Children's Home, please call:

Cunningham Children's Home
Cloydia Hill Larimore
Director of Resource Development
1301 N. Cunningham Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802

Telephone: 217-367-3728

Hope for the Children

Located about 25 miles from Urbana and Cunningham Children's Home is the former Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. Several years ago, when the closure of the base was pending, Brenda Eheart, a professor of child development and public policy at the University of Illinois, saw an opportunity. Building on her background as a parent and as a researcher in child welfare, she went to work to build a community that would prevent children from being bounced from one foster care home to another. She began to navigate the political system in the state to receive funding for her organization, Hope for the Children. When the project received state funding of $1 million along with private donations, the dream became a reality, and a block of housing was purchased on the former Air Force base for approximately $215,000. The circle of houses, now filled with foster parents, children, foster grandparents, and counselors, is part of Hope Meadows, an exciting example of the "whole village" approach put into action to support needy children.

For more information about Hope for the Children and Hope Meadows, please call:

Carolyn Costeel
1530 Fairway Dr.
Rantoul, IL 61866
Telephone: 217-893-4673

Source:

Crandall, Lynn. (1996, November 1). Women who make a difference: Hope for the children. *Family Circle, 109*, 19-20.

Other initiatives started by mothers out of their concern for an issue include:

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

MADD includes moms, dads, young people, and others who are trying to prevent drunk driving and support victims of violent crime. Chapters are located across the country and sponsor a variety of public awareness programs geared to preventing alcohol and substance abuse.

URL: http://www.madd.org/

Mothers at Home (MAH)

MAH is a national, nonprofit organization in its second decade of helping mothers who choose to stay at home and nurture their families. MAH has several publications and furthers the support of women who choose to stay at home through public policy, advocacy, and media relations.

URL: http://www.netrail.net/~mah/

Allergy and Asthma Network--Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc. (AAN-MA)

AAN-MA is an international nonprofit organization that supports the education of families dealing with asthma and allergies. Members receive access to medical research, current treatments, therapies, coping techniques, and related publications.

URL: http://www.podi.com/health/aanma

March of Dimes: Mothers March

The Mothers March began in 1950 in Phoenix, Arizona, and is the oldest fund-raising event of the March of Dimes. It was initiated when a group of parents were trying to raise money for a cure for polio. Now the Mothers March is coordinated through local chapters and a letter-writing campaign.

URL: http://www.modimes.org/involved/mothers.htm

During the month of May, we encourage you to notice the volunteer efforts of so many people, particularly mothers, within your neighborhood and support them where and when you are able.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Understanding Reading and Writing Acquisition While Holding Standards High

by Jean Robbins

Our guest writer, Jean Robbins, was a teacher for eight years and principal for 17 years. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at the University of New Hampshire in the English and Education departments. For the past two years, she has worked with teachers in New Hampshire who are studying the research in language arts to develop the most effective methods to help their students become readers and writers.

"Doesn't the main character remind you of the boy in *Hatchet*?" "What do you think will happen next?" "It made me sad when he had to leave his mother to go with a stranger on a little airplane. I could understand why he felt so uncomfortable with the guy." " I really like Gary Paulsen's books! His characters seem like real people."

This was a conversation I overheard when I visited a sixth-grade classroom in late October. Three boys had their heads together talking about a book they were reading. I stopped to listen in and join their literary discussion.

"Have you been reading this book since school began in September?" I asked. "Oh, no," was the quick response. "We've read four other books. This one is really good."

Not many years ago, sixth-graders would read two books during their school year, the 6-1 and the 6-2. They took turns reading with the teacher, in groups determined by their reading level, and would respond to questions designed to check their factual understanding of the text. The boys I talked with in October had gone far beyond the level of literal comprehension. They were talking about the author's purpose, relating the story to events in their own lives, and making the connections to other books they had read. They sounded much like a group of adult readers who come together to probe the meanings of the stories they read.

In first grade, Suzie had written in her September journal: "MY FaVRT Flwr is rose." In January, she wrote: "I am a gwiyit prsen. I wrck very hord. I have too frends they are good wrcrs." Suzie is learning the conventions of our written language. She knew how to separate words when she entered first grade. It took her only a few months to realize lowercase letters predominate in books. She has noticed that c, k, and ck often make the same sound, and she is experimenting as she constructs a hypothesis of spelling patterns. From continued exposure to print—reading books, having stories read to her, and experimenting with the often-strange spelling patterns of our English language--and with help from her teachers, she will continue into her adult life, mastering the spelling and grammatical conventions derived from Latin, Greek, German, and Old English that make our written language so complex.

As parents and teachers, we fret about the phonetic spelling children put on paper as they tell their stories in writing. But who wouldn't rather have a child describe the gray animal at the zoo as "enrmus" rather than "big?" To limit young children to words they are able to spell restricts their ability to write their thoughts. Knowing each child and using our knowledge of language, we can help him or her to develop competency in spelling throughout the school years.

These are stories of children who are becoming literate, learning to communicate their thoughts and to interpret others' ideas. By continuing to set high standards for discussions and written work, parents and teachers can provide the guidance and instruction needed to help students become responsible learners.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Latchkey Children

by Debbie Reese

Throughout the school year, many children go home from school and spend a few hours alone, waiting for their parent(s) to return home from work. With summer approaching, parents must decide, "Is my child old enough to stay home alone *all day*?" Many low-income parents are able to pay for a few hours of child care, but the prospect of full-day costs are prohibitive.

Children who stay home alone, either for a few hours after school during the school year or for the summer months, are commonly referred to as "latchkey children." The phrase "latchkey" originates from the early 19th century, when children in a similar situation would wear the key to their home tied to a string they wore around their neck and were responsible for their own care (Southern Early Childhood Association, 1993). Self-care is often seen by parents as an opportunity for the child to build self-esteem, confidence, and competence.

In a recent study conducted in New York, parents of latchkey children were interviewed about their attitudes towards having their children, ranging in age from 8-10, in self-care during the after-school hours. Most felt the children were able to care for themselves, but they felt guilty over the arrangement and expressed dissatisfaction over the local school-based after-school program. Most parents did not allow their children to play outside and reported allowing the children to spend their time watching television (Boland & Simmonds, 1996).

Community Support for Latchkey Children

In some communities, the public library becomes the place latchkey children spend their unsupervised hours. A 1988 survey about latchkey children in the library indicated that as many as 76% of libraries are used by latchkey children during the school week. While many librarians feel it is necessary and important for the public library to serve this population, problems occur due to unsupervised behavior, children not being picked up at closing time, disruptive behavior, and inappropriate use of the library. Librarians are divided on the issue of coping with latchkey children. Some feel it is not the library's responsibility to provide this service, while others feel it is an excellent opportunity to reach a population that may not otherwise develop skills to use the library effectively (Tinnish, 1995).

Many communities establish hotline numbers for latchkey children to use when they feel the need to hear an adult voice. In Chicago, latchkey children can call "Grandma Please!" and talk with an adult volunteer, typically a senior citizen, who has been through a specially designed training program. The "Grandma Please" service provides latchkey children with the opportunity to engage in conversation and gain comfort from the volunteer.

Other services have been established for parents whose work schedules do not allow them easy access to a telephone to call home periodically to check on the child. For example, the KidCalls Telephone Monitoring service is an automated calling system. Parents leave a recorded message with the service, which automatically dials the home at the appointed time. If everything is ok, the child presses "1"; if the child needs help, the child presses "2." If the child presses 2 or there is no answer, the service begins calling a network of individuals living nearby with whom the parent has made prior arrangements to be contacted in such cases.

Parents with children in latchkey situations are usually careful to provide them with ground rules to follow during the hours they are home alone. The National Safety Institute ("Home Alone," n.d.) offers the following basic guidelines:

- Make sure doors and windows are locked while the child is home alone.
- Post emergency telephone numbers next to the telephones.
- Post telephone numbers of trusted neighbors or friends near the telephone.
- Require the child to check in with a neighbor or parent indicating they have arrived home safely.
- Make sure the child does not open the door to anyone that he or she doesn't know well or is unsure of.
- Tell the child not to let unfamiliar callers know he or she is home alone.
- Leave an extra key with a trusted neighbor (for the occasion when the child loses the key).
- Parents and children should also be sure they practice emergency procedures, such as how to leave the home if a fire breaks out, what to do in case of threatening weather, or other disaster situations such as earthquakes.

Other Options

It is often the case that a community is not aware of the need to provide care for school-aged children in a given neighborhood. Parents may wish to hold organizational meetings and plan for ways to meet their needs for child care. Various agencies and institutions are available to assist parents in accessing school-age child care or to help them establish school-age child care programs. Parents can contact:

- their local county Cooperative Extension Service Office;
- the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA), an organization composed of individuals and groups who are new to the field of school-age child care;
- the School-Age Child Care Project at Wellesley College Center for Research on Women

For further information:

"Grandma, Please!"
4520 N. Beacon St.
Chicago, IL 60640
Telephone: 773-561-3500
URL: http://www.terasys.com/hullhouse/grandma.html

National School-Age Care Alliance
4720 N. Park
Indianapolis, IN 46205
Telephone: 317-283-3817

School-Age Child Care Project
Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181
Telephone: 617-83-2547
URL: http://www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC

Sources:

Boland, Pat, & Simmond, Audrey. (1996). *Latchkey children: Are they prepared for self-care?* Bronx, NY: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. PS 025035)

Home alone . . . Security tips for latchkey kids [Online}. (No date). Available: http://nsi.org/Tips/homealon.htm [1997, April 2].

Southern Early Childhood Association (1993). The latchkey solution: School-age care comes of age. A SECA public policy institute report. *Dimensions, 21*(4), 5-8.

Tinnish, Diane. (1995). Latchkey kids and the library. *Emergency Librarian,23*(2), 17-19.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Directory of Hotlines and Online Services for Parents

by Dawn Ramsburg

Have you ever wondered who you can call in times of parenting crisis? Or has your child ever needed help with homework that you could not provide? If so, the following list of hotlines and online services may be a useful resource to you. There are many organizations that can provide assistance for parents from such topics as feeling frustrated by an out-of-control child to wanting help with your child's homework. While many of these hotlines are free of charge and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week nationwide, please note that others are only available in certain areas, at certain times, or for a fee.

Nationwide Parenting Hotlines

Boy's Town National Hotline

Provides crisis intervention, information, and referrals for children and families. Spanish-speaking counselors and access to translation services for 100 other languages are also available.
1-800-448-3000 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).
1-800-448-1833 (TTY).

Child Abuse Hotline

Provides services to children and adults involved with child abuse.
1-800-422-4453 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

Child Care Aware Toll-Free Parent Information Line

A service for parents across the United States who need child care.
1-800-424-2246

Child Find Hotline

Helps parents locate children and helps lost children who need assistance.
1-800-I-AM-LOST (9am-5pm EST, Monday to Friday).

Child Help USA Hotline

Provides crisis counseling as well as general information on child abuse and related issues.
1-800-422-4453 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

Down Syndrome Hotline

Provides information and referral services to new parents, information on education, support groups, medical research, a newsletter, and information on conferences.
1-800-221-4602 (9am-5pm EST, Monday to Friday).

Kid Save

Provides information and referrals to public and private services for children and adolescents in crisis.
1-800-543-7283 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

National AIDS Hotline

Answers basic questions about AIDS/HIV (prevention, transmission, testing, health care).
1-800-342-AIDS (24 hours a day/seven days a week).
Spanish: 1-800-344-7432 (8am-2am EST).
TTY: 1-800-AID-7889 (10am-10pm EST, Monday-Friday).
Teens: 1-800-234-TEEN.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Provides assistance to parents and law enforcement officials who seek help with a missing or exploited child case, who want prevention information on how to safeguard children, and who need help with reunification once the child is found.
1-800-THE-LOST (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

National Immunization Information Hotline

Provides referrals and information on shots infants need.
1-800-232-2522 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

National Parent Information Network

Responds to requests from parents and professionals who work with parents regarding parenting and education-related issues from birth to early adolescence.
1-800-583-4135
Email: askeric@ericir.syr.edu

NineLine

Helps parents with problems with their children and provides referrals for youth or parents regarding drugs, homelessness, and runaways. If all counselors are busy, stay on the line and one will be with you as soon as possible.
1-800-999-9999 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

Teen Help

Provides a national toll-free hotline designed to assist parents, child care professionals, and others in locating appropriate resources for the treatment of struggling adolescents.
1-800-637-0701

Parenting Hotlines for Specific Areas

Baby Your Baby Hotline (Utah only)

A toll-free resource for all pregnant women and their families in Utah. Provides assistance with prenatal care, finding child care, information on immunizations, or where to find parenting support groups.
1-800-826-9662 (7:30 am-5:30 pm, Monday to Friday)

Families with a Future Hotline (Illinois only)

For parents in Illinois who need help with prenatal and newborn care. Services also available in Spanish.
1-800-545-2200

Parent Information and Referral Center (Colorado only)

Designed for anyone taking care of kids (parents, grandparents, daycare providers, etc.) who have questions.
1-800-690-2282

Parent Line (North Dakota only)

Provides information and assistance to parents in North Dakota.
1-800-258-0808
231-7923 in Fargo

Parents Anonymous (See local listings)

There are over 1,200 organizations nationwide--most with some type of crisis service. Check your local phone listings for the number in your area.

Parents Anonymous of Arizona provides a 24-hour hotline for Arizona residents only.
1-800-352-0528

Commercial Parenting Hotlines

American Baby Helpline

Provides advice on a variety of baby-related topics, such as discipline or feeding. Calls cost $.95 per minute.
1-900-860-4888 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

Parenting Tips Hotline

For Helpful Tips on: Baby before Birth, Toddler Training, Pre-Teens & Teen. Plus Tips on: Breast Feeding, Bedtime, Tantrums, Schools and Talking about Sex. Calls cost $2.00 per minute.
1-900-988-0187 ext. 224.

Homework Hotlines

Dial-A-Teacher

Free service run by the New York City teachers' union and the United Federation of Teachers. Can provide answers in French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, and Creole. Closed on school holidays.
1-212-777-3380 (4-7 pm EST, Monday to Thursday).

Homework Hotline

Provides advice to help your child succeed in spelling, math, vocabulary, reading, memory tops, and Learning How to Learn. Calls cost $2.75 a minute.
1-900-443-3233, ext. 500 (24 hours a day/seven days a week).

Parenting Help Online

Parents AskERIC

An electronic mail question-and-answer service for parents and those who work with parents on issues related to child development, care, and education.
Email: Askeric@ericir.syr.edu

Homework Help Online

Dr. Math

Provides assistance with math as well as other homework problems. Operated by the Math Forum of Swarthmore College and financed by the National Science Foundation.
URL: http://forum.swarthmore.edu/dr.math

Family Education Network

Provides general information on a variety of topics.
URL: http://www.family.education.com

Homework Help

Click on one of the links on the main Homework Help page and you'll go to a general discussion on that academic subject. Once you are in one of the areas, you're free to browse the questions and responses, or to post a question of your own. Teachers from several school districts in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN) area monitor the discussions and will post responses to your questions. They may point you to someplace on the Internet where you can find the answer on your own, or they provide the answer and then point you to places where you can find out even more.
URL: http://www.startribune.com/stonline/html/special/homework/index.html

KidsConnect

Provides answers to questions sent via electronic mail within 48 hours. Staffed with volunteer online librarians. Run by the American Association of School Librarians.
URL: http://www.ala.org/ICONN/kidsconn.html

Monroe County Public Library (Bloomington, IN)

Provides an electronic mail question-and-answer service.
URL: askus@monroe.lib.in.us

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Children's Books

Periodically, the National Parent Information Network (NPIN) will provide a list of children's books on the topics covered in *Parent News*. For example, NPIN articles this month included the following topics: children with no parents (foster children, orphaned children, or children separated from their parents due to wartime activities), latchkey children, and family literacy. Below is a list of books that parents may wish to read to their children.

Unaccompanied and Displaced Children

Circle of Love (Orphan Train Adventures, No. 7) by Joan Lowery Nixon (Published in 1997 by Doubleday Dell).

Happy Adoption Day, by John McCutcheon (Published in 1996 by Little, Brown).

How It Feels to Be Adopted, by Jill Krementz (Published in 1988 by Knopf).

Robby Really Transforms: A Story about Grown-Ups Helping Children, by Matthew R. Galvin and Sandra Ferraro (Published in 1991 by Brunner/Mazel).

Somebody Somewhere Knows My Name, by Linda Lowery.

Latchkey Children

Disaster Blaster: A Kid's Guide to Being Home Alone, by Karin Kasdin and Laura Szabo-Cohen (Published in 1996 by Avon Books).

I'll Take You to Mrs Cole! by Nigel Gray, illustrated by Michael Foreman (Published in 1992 by Kane/Miller Book Publishers).

Is Anybody There? by Eve Bunting (Published in 1990 by Trophy).

The Latchkey Dog by Mary Jane Auch, illustrated by Cat Bowman Smith (Published in 1994 by Little Brown & Company).

Latchkey Kid, by Irene Cumming Kleeberg (Published in 1985 by Franklin Watts).

Ellen Is Home Alone (A Sweet Valley High book), by Francine Pascal. (Published in 1997 by Skylark).

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter Ten: Violence and Action on TV (see previous issues for chapters 1-9).

Have you ever noticed your children imitating some of the action they have seen on television? Maybe it is make-believe "galloping" on an imaginary horse, driving an imaginary car, or "shooting" with pointed fingers at invisible pursuers. Often, however, if the violence they've witnessed is very realistic, children may also imitate punching or kicking and possibly hurting others. Those children who watch many violent action shows may begin to adopt some of the mannerisms and provocative attitudes of superheros and resort increasingly to fighting with their friends to settle disagreements.

In the past two decades, a growing number of researchers, educators, and parents have been concerned that the considerable amount of violence on television may have a harmful impact on young viewers. However, it would be foolish to attribute all the violence in America to the influence of television since there was plenty of violence in the country well before TV was around.

Nonetheless, children watch large amounts of television daily. As a result, while it is believed that the networks and local stations have a responsibility to curb violent programming, the ultimate responsibility for limiting children's exposure to violence on TV rests with parents and other adult caretakers.

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide suggestions for teaching children that most violence on TV and in movies is not real and should not be imitated. It focuses on explaining to children why violence is not fun, and on discussing other ways besides aggression to resolve problems that arise in daily life. In addition, it focuses on teaching your children that the violence portrayed on TV is distorted, and that violence on TV often seems fun and exciting because the consequences of violence are not usually shown on TV.

According to George Gerbner and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania, the level of violence in prime-time television measured over 20 years has remained about 5 violent acts an hour, although the number is higher (20-25 acts per hour) on children's Saturday morning programs.

Does violent television programming increase the likelihood that children will engage in more fighting and disruptive behavior? For many years, parents and some mental health specialists believed that watching violence on TV had little effect on children and might even be good for them as it would "drain off" some of their aggressive energy. However, the extensive research conducted by Albert Bandura of Stanford

University and Leonard Berkowitz of the University of Wisconsin has demonstrated that both children and adults exposed to violence in movies and TV rarely become *less* aggressive; rather, the evidence is fairly strong that they show greater tendencies to be aggressive after watching violent shows.

Numerous studies have replicated these results with children of different ages and with children in other countries. Thus, most researchers conclude that regardless of how it is studied, children and adults who watch more violent programs tend to behave more aggressively and to favor the use of aggression to resolve conflicts.

To mediate the potential impact of violent television, you can point out that the actors are only pretending to fight and that they are well-trained in how to miss each other. You can tell children that policemen or detectives rarely resolve conflicts by shooting people, and if they do, they usually have to undergo a hearing to justify their resorting to firearms. Children should also be urged to think about the families of persons shot or injured. Children need frequent reminders of this in view of the continuous dosage of "easy" violence on television.

Not all violence and aggression on television is physical, however. There is also a good deal of verbal insults and "put-downs" on TV. To adults these seem harmless enough because we know people don't usually talk that way. Children often do not grasp this, especially when they see everyone laughing at such remarks. They need to see that to repeat the remarks heard on TV to other people in real life would hurt them deeply, and even provoke aggression.

Discussion Ideas

1. Action shows are shows that portray a lot of activity, such as car chases, fights, or people running to catch someone or to escape from someone. What action shows do you watch?

2. Read your child this violent passage from a TV script:

   "An old blue car pulls sharply away from the curb with its brakes screeching, while someone jumps into the passenger seat and slams the door. The car quickly turns the corner and speeds away.

   A man starts his motorcycle on another street and begins to weave in and out of traffic. The blue car then pulls into an alley at high speed. The motorcycle turns into the same alley from the other direction. The blue car swerves as the motorcycle falls and skids into some trash cans. The blue car then speeds away.

   The motorcyclist gets up and pulls out a rifle from his pack, and quickly runs to the end of the alley, bends down on one knee, takes aim, and fires repeatedly at the blue car. The car is hit and immediately bursts into flames and crashes into a store."

   Talk about how reading the above violent scene feels different than watching it on TV. The impact of special effects, music, imagination, etc., should be discussed.

3. Ask your child to think for a minute about how he or she feels when someone is hurt or killed in a TV program. Does it seem real? Stress that violence is not fun or funny. Ask if the real world is like that. Talk about why so many violent programs exist on TV.

4. Do the stars of TV programs ever get badly hurt or killed? Why or why not?

5. Parents can explain the concept of verbal aggression. Why is it portrayed as funny? Is it true that "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me?" Are there alternatives to verbal and physical aggression? Talk about how verbal aggression may seem funny on TV, but not in real life.

Sometimes people imitate verbal and physical aggression that they see on TV. Give examples from their own experiences. Ask your children: "Have you ever noticed yourself imitating violence on TV? Why does this happen? What can we do to stop it?"

Activity Ideas

Activity 1: Physical Aggression Chart

Some cartoons and action programs show a lot of chasing, fighting, and bloodshed. If you watch a cartoon or action program, rate how much physical aggression was on the program by answering the following questions.

Name of Program

1. How many characters were killed on this program?
2. How many characters were physically hurt (but not killed)?
3. Were there any crimes committed on this show? If so, what were they?
4. Were there any car chases? Car accidents? Fires? Other accidents or disasters?
5. How was the bad person punished?
6. Did the program make physical aggression seem fun or funny or exciting?
7. Did it show that violence hurts people unfairly?
8. Sometimes programs show violence that seems wrong or silly because it was not necessary. Could the fighting or killing have been avoided by talking? Could the person have been arrested quietly instead of being chased in a car?

Activity 2

1. Choose an action show and a cartoon that you usually watch, and keep track of the violent actions on the Physical Aggression Chart (Activity 1).
2. After watching a TV show that seems violent, write down how you feel.
3. How can you tell the difference between violence on the news and violence on action programs?
4. Interview a real police officer. Ask him or her whether police work is as exciting in real life as it is on TV.
5. Draw two pictures where two people are solving a problem: One is violent and the other is not.

Activity 3: Verbal Aggression Chart

Some action programs show people saying mean things to each other, even if they don't fight. Some situation comedies show people making fun of each other by calling each other names or saying mean things about each other. These are examples of verbal aggression.

If you watch a program with verbal aggression, rate the program by answering the following questions:

Name of program:

1. What kind of verbal aggression was used on this program? Did people say mean things to each other as if they wanted to hurt the other person physically (i.e., "I'll knock you down," or "I'd like to hit you.") Did people make fun of each other, calling names or using other verbal put-downs?
2. Can you give an example of verbal aggression from this program?
3. Did the program make verbal aggression seem fun or funny or exciting? How?
4. How would you have felt if someone said something like that to you or about you?

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Family Literacy and Reading in the Summer Months

Many research studies have found that children who are read to in their home do better in school. Family literacy can take many forms, from bedtime "read me a story" rituals to reading environmental print (such as cereal boxes) to reading "how to" instructions for assembling toys or playing games.

With the summer months approaching, parents want to encourage their children to continue reading throughout their vacation period. Information is available from many different resources.

The U.S. Department of Education publishes a series of brochures titled "Summer Home Learning Recipes" that are available at no charge by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN. Brochures are designed in the following categories (K-3; 4-5; 6-8; 9-12) and are available in English and Spanish.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is a nonprofit children's literacy organization that publishes the following brochures for parents. Each brochure costs $1.00 and may be ordered from Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., Network Publications Dept., 600 Maryland Ave. SW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20024-2569. The titles are:

Building a Family Library. Ideas for creating an inexpensive home library and helping children build their own collections.

Children Who Can Read, But Don't... How to help reluctant readers aged 9-13 discover the fun of reading.

Choosing Good Books for Children. Information and resources to help parents find appropriate books for their children from infancy to age 12.

Encouraging Soon-to-Be-Readers. How to excite preschoolers about books and help them to develop the skills that lead to reading.

Encouraging Young Writers. Activities that motivate preschoolers to begin writing and school-age children to write more.

Family Storytelling. Tips and techniques for telling stories and turning to books for more.

Magazines and Family Reading. Ways that magazines can get the whole family turning pages.

Reading Aloud to Your Children. The why's, when's, where's, what's, and how's of reading aloud.

Reading: What's in It for Teenagers?/Teenagers and Reading. Two brochures in one--perforated for parents to keep their half and give the other half to their teenager.

Summertime Reading. How to encourage your children to open books after the school doors close.

Upbeat and Offbeat Activities to Encourage Reading. Playful projects and activities to help preschoolers and beginning readers build skills.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Preparing for the Summer: From Activity Suggestions to Safety Guidelines

by Dawn Ramsburg

Even though your kids might still be in school for another month, it is not too early to start thinking about your plans for the summer. You might already be discussing where to go on your family vacation, or searching for a camp for your children. Or maybe you need help planning activities to do at home with your children.

At the same time as you are planning activities for the summer, it is also important to consider some important summer safety tips. May 10-18, 1997, is National Safe Kids Week, sponsored by the National Safe Kids Campaign.

This article contains tips and suggestions for summer activities as well as some safety guidelines. We hope these resources help make the summer an enjoyable time for everyone in your family.

Activities

Summertime is usually full of activities for many families. Perhaps you're going on vacation, the kids are playing on a sports team, or you want to send your children to a camp. Or maybe your family spends much of the time outdoors during the summer, either in the backyard or camping. To help your family get the most out of this summer's activities, we've compiled a set of tips and resources for your summer activities.

Travel Resources

One of the main activities you may be planning for the summer is a trip or a vacation. Whether you are thinking of a getaway for the day, or about something more extensive, there are a few things you may need to do to make the trip enjoyable for your family. You may also need some suggestions on what to do while traveling with your children as well.

The *Penny Whistle Traveling with Kids Book* contains hundreds of family-tested ideas and tips on everything from what to pack, how to find the best museums for kids, and recipes for "road food." Topics include "planning your trip with your children," "before leaving home," "games for traveling," and resources and travel guides.

Summer Camp Tips and Resources

Camps provide many choices for children and families. Some offer certain themes (sports, arts and crafts, etc.), while others provide a wide array of activities. Some parents may choose to send their children to the specialized camps for a short period over the summer, while others may rely on day camps to provide care for their school-age children during the summer months. Or perhaps you would like to attend a family camp.

While their are many choices of camps available, how do you know what to choose for your children? School-age children share many of the same needs as younger children when in the care of others, including security, safety, and a comfortable environment. Older children still need contact with caring, well-trained adults who pay attention to their individual needs. Thus, it is important for parents to consider the camp that best meets the needs of their children *and* their family. To select the best camp for your family, there are several steps you can follow.

1. *Collect information.* You can find the names of camps from neighbors, friends, advertisements in newspapers, local organizations (such as the YMCA, park district, or the Boys and Girls Clubs), and even from Internet sites (such as *Kids Camps*, a comprehensive directory of camps for kids and families). As you collect the names of camps, call or send away for information about the camp. Consider visiting different camps and meeting with the personnel there to see if it might meet the needs of your family. Some camps may even have open house dates where you can meet with staff, ask questions, and see the facilities.

2. Ask yourself the following questions:

    - How well will my children be taken care of? How many adults are there per child? What is the overall camp ratio (Katz, n.d.)? How experienced are the staff? Is there an on-site health specialist? Are snacks and meals available that meet the expanding needs of active growing school-agers?
    - How well equipped is the camp to meeting the needs of children who are different ages? Do the facilities provide for special weather conditions?
    - What types of activities does the camp provide?
    - What are your child's interests? What are your interests for your child(ren)? Try to compromise when choosing a camp. If needed, you might decide on a few camps for your child to choose from. This strategy allows them to choose but allows you to influence their horizons (Iowa State University Extension, n.d.).
    - Has your child ever been away from home before? For how long? Will a friend be accompanying your child? Having a friend attend camp with your child might help the adjustment to the new environment.
    - How much does it cost, and does it fit the family budget?
    - Are there other children of the same age and interest level for your child to interact and develop friendships with?

3. *Select* the camp that best fits your ideas and your child's needs. If you work together in this process, the time at camp will likely be more enjoyable for both you and your child.

Resources for Home Activities

U.S. Department of Education Summertime Calendar. While this calendar was published last year, the activities listed can still provide you useful ideas for this summer.

365 TV-Free Activities. Are you looking for something to do with your children while they are home this summer? Would you like to do something other than watch TV? This list offers a year's worth of

suggestions.

365 Outdoor Activities. Are you looking for activities to do outside while the weather is nicer this summer? Here's a list of activities to do all year round.

Home Learning Activities. If you are looking for ways to maintain your children's education over the summer, the U.S. Department of Education has prepared summer home learning recipes.

Safety Guidelines

As mentioned in the introduction to this article, May 10-18, 1997, is National Safe Kids Week. This event is sponsored by the National Safe Kids Campaign. During this week, the National Safe Kids Campaign will unveil a new initiative, SAFE KIDS Gear Up. The cornerstone of this effort is the *SAFE KIDS Gear Up Guide*, a visually oriented, easy-to-read booklet that illustrates the safety gear and precautions families need to use to keep children safe from injury at home, in the car, and at play. The guide will be distributed by the Campaign and its more than 200 state and local coalitions at the SAFE KIDS Gear Up Games in communities nationwide during National Safe Kids Week.

Each page of the guide focuses on a child-proofed setting where children live and play--a kitchen, bathroom, family room, nursery, garage, swimming pool, and recreational park--and the safety precautions and life-saving gear, such as child safety seats, bike helmets, and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, needed to make those areas safe for kids.

> "Even the most loving of parents unknowingly put their children in danger when they overlook simple safety precautions or do not fully understand how to properly use safety gear," said Heather Paul, Ph.D., Campaign executive director. "We hope that families will join us to 'gear up' to keep their children free from injury."

Backyard Safety

To help your children remain safe in your backyard, the American Academy of Pediatrics (1993) suggests the following guidelines:

1. Teach your children the boundaries that are acceptable for them to play within if you do not have a fenced-in yard. Always have someone supervise outdoor play.
2. Check your yard for dangerous plants. The leading cause of poisoning in preschoolers is plants. If you are unsure about any of the plants in your yard, call your local poison control center and request a list of poisonous plants common in your area. If you find any, either replace them or securely fence and lock that area of the yard away from your children.
3. Teach your children never to pick and eat anything from a plant, no matter how good it looks without your permission. This is particularly important if you grow produce and you let your children help out with the garden.
4. If you use pesticides or herbicides on your lawn or garden, read the instructions carefully. Don't allow children to play on a treated lawn for at least 48 hours.
5. Don't use a power mower to cut the grass while young children are around. The mower can throw sticks or stones that can injure them. Never have your children on a riding mower even when you are driving.
6. When you cook food outdoors, screen the grill so that your children cannot touch it (explain that it is hot like the stove inside). Store propane grills so your children cannot reach the knobs. Be sure charcoal is cold before you dump it.

Bicycle Safety

To help reduce the risk to your child from riding a bicycle or tricycle, the American Academy of Pediatrics (1993) has the following safety suggestions:

1. Don't buy a tricycle until your child is physically able to handle it (for most children this is around age 3).
2. Buy a tricycle that is low to the ground and has big wheels. This type is safer because it is less likely to tip over.
3. Use tricycles in protected places and away from automobiles.
4. In general, most children do not have the balance and muscle coordination to ride a two-wheel bike until around age 7. Around age 6, however, children can generally safely ride a two-wheeler with training wheels. To protect your children from injury, make sure they have an approved bicycle helmet (a "Snell Approved" or "Meets ANSI Z90.4 Standard" sticker should be inside or on the box).

For more on bicycle safety, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission list of publications.

Playground Safety

American youth benefit from many innovatively designed playgrounds, a great asset for their physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development. All playgrounds are not created equally well, however. Many are not age-appropriate, nor are they designed and maintained to ensure children's safety. For example, many playgrounds have age-inappropriate activities, insufficient supervision, entrapment hazards in openings, protrusion and entanglement hazards, inadequate fall zones, improper protective surfaces, and lack of maintenance.

The past two decades have seen a dramatic increase in playground-related injuries, according to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. In 1994, nearly 200,000 injuries requiring emergency room visits were attributed to accidents on the playground. Clearly, steps need to be taken to insure the safe play of children on our nations playgrounds.

To help you determine how safe your playground is, the National Program for Playground Safety has developed a checklist.

Water Safety

Water can be one of the most dangerous hazards to which your children are exposed because young children can drown in only a few inches of water. To help reduce the risks, when your children are near water, the American Academy of Pediatrics (1993) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission suggest the following guidelines:

- Be aware of the small bodies of water your children may encounter (fishponds, ditches, fountains, rain barrels, watering cans, the bucket of water you use to wash your car). Children are drawn to such places and need constant supervision to be sure they don't fall in. Be sure to instruct baby-sitters about potential hazards to young children in and around swimming pools and the need for constant supervision as well.
- Children who are swimming (even in a shallow toddler's pool) should be watched by an adult, preferably one with CPR training. Inflatable pools should be emptied after each use.

- Enforce safety rules—no running near the pool and no pushing others underwater.
- Don't allow your children to use inflatable toys or mattresses to keep them afloat because they deflate suddenly in water that is too deep.
- Be sure that the deep and shallow ends of any pool are clearly marked. Never allow your children to dive in the shallow end.
- If you have a swimming pool at home, it should be completely surrounded with a tall fence that has a self-locking gate. Keep the gate closed and locked at all times. Be sure your children cannot manipulate the lock or climb the fence. Place tables and chairs well away from the pool fence to prevent children from climbing into the pool area.
- If your pool has a cover, remove it completely before swimming because children may become entrapped under it.
- Keep a safety ring with a rope beside the pool at all times. If possible, have a phone in the pool area with emergency numbers clearly marked.
- Don't allow young children to use spas and hot tubs; they can easily drown in them as well as become overheated.
- When your children ride in a boat, always have them wear a life preserver. A life preserver fits properly if you can't lift it off over their head after it's been fastened.
- Do not consider young children "drown proof" because they have had swimming lessons; young children should always be watched carefully while swimming.
- Keep toys away from the pool area because a young child playing with the toys could accidentally fall in the water.

Sport Safety (including soccer, baseball, skateboarding/in-line skating)

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has several publications dealing with these topics under recreational safety.

Sources:

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Of Interest

Update on Early Childhood Events and Resources

by Dawn Ramsburg

Last month, we featured several articles on the numerous activities that supported young children and their development. To follow-up, we wanted to highlight where to find resources related to these events.

First, on April 17, the White House hosted a conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. This conference featured several child development experts who spoke on brain development, prenatal care, language development in young children, and child care. President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton made opening remarks as well as comments throughout the morning session. They also announced that the White House would host a conference devoted to child care in the fall. Tapes of the Early Childhood Development and Learning conference can be ordered for $22.50 from Christiana Boyle, Box 7605, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7605; telephone: 919-515-9133.

More information on this conference can be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/ECDC/

Second, the Presidents' Summit for America's Future was held April 27-29 in Philadelphia. This is a multi-year national effort aimed at providing the 15 million at-risk young children in America the resources they need to succeed. The intent of the summit is to develop concrete action plans to assist America's youth so that they have access to five fundamental resources:

1. an ongoing relationship with a caring adult (for example, a mentor, tutor, or coach);
2. safe places and structured activities during nonschool hours to learn and grow;
3. a healthy start;
4. a marketable skill through effective education; and
5. an opportunity to give back through community service.

To learn more about this summit, visit the following Web site:
http://www.citizenservice.org/

Finally, last year on June 1, more than a quarter of a million supporters turned out for Stand for Children at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. This year's event is the Virtual Stand for Children (a two-week Internet-based campaign from May 25-June 6, 1997), which has the following components:

1. the Virtual Stand for Children Web site,
2. a World Wide Web banner campaign, and
3. an email pledge campaign.

The Virtual Stand for Children will focus on children's health and will also include chat sessions, virtual pledge forms, and information about local Children's Action Team (CAT) programs.

The Virtual Stand for Children is inviting companies, organizations, and individuals to demonstrate their commitment to children by featuring a Stand for Children banner or logo, linked to the Stand for Children home page, on their Web sites during the two-week online event. In mid-May, Stand for Children will launch a campaign asking people to send email messages pledging to take a Stand for Children. For every email received, sponsors will contribute to a scholarship fund for young people who have beaten the odds in order to become leaders and academic standouts (up to $25,000 total).

In addition to the Virtual Stand for Children, organizers at Stand for Children are encouraging organizations and individuals to transfer their energy and commitment to their own neighborhoods by forming CATs.

To learn more about Stand for Children, the Virtual Stand for Children, or CATs, visit the following Web site:
http://www.stand.org/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

What You Should Know Before You Adopt a Child

A miniguide published by the Attachment Center at Evergreen, this pamphlet provides a brief background on children available for adoption in the United States. The concept of attachment with adoptive children and families is discussed as well as encouraging parents to be fully informed and prepared about a child they may be adopting. There is also a list of organizations that support and advise adoptive parents.

The Attachment Center at Evergreen
P.O. Box 2764
Evergreen, CO 80437-2764
Telephone: 303-674-1910

Our Journey from the Protection Model to the Partnership Model

This 20-minute video, produced by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, provides a dramatic interpretation of one school's attempt to increase parental involvement. Designed for the elementary school level, it portrays the attitudes and feelings of parents and teachers as the process begins, including feelings of uncertainty as new roles are being established.

Learning Together
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Telephone: 608-266-9757

Families, Communities, Schools--Learning Together

This series of several manuals produced by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides a variety of information for parents and schools as they begin the collaborative process of building partnerships with parents and the community. The series includes home-school learning activities as well as suggestions for involving parents in school policy decisions.

Bureau for Families, Communities and Publications

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Telephone: 608-266-9757

Light the Way: School Volunteer Resource Guide

Designed to assist schools in developing successful volunteer programs for parents and community members, this guide covers a variety of topics such as starting a program, school board polices, encouraging volunteers, commending volunteers, youth service learning, and risk management. There is also a section with sample forms that are helpful for identifying areas of need within classrooms that will match with areas of interest for volunteers.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Telephone: 608-266-9757

Parents Who Care, A Guide for Families with Teens

This video and book are designed to be a step-by-step guide for families with adolescents. Chapters include topics such as "Relating to Your Teen," "Identifying Risks and Reducing Them," "Bonding with Your Teen to Strengthen Resiliency," "Working with the Family to Resolve Problems," "Allowing Everyone to Contribute," "Setting Family Policies," and "Supervising without Invading." The book and video might also be appropriate for a parenting group focused on adolescents.

Developmental Research and Programs
130 Nickerson St., Suite 107
Seattle, WA 98109
Telephone: 800-736-2630

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. ***Starting Smart: How Early Experiences Affect Brain Development.*** **(1996). Ounce of Prevention Fund, 122 South Michigan Ave., Suite 2050, Chicago, IL 60603; telephone: 312-922-3863; fax: 312-922-3337; email: HN3852@handsnet.org**

Recent research has provided great insight into the impact of early experience on brain development. It is now believed that brain growth is highly dependent upon early experiences. Neurons allow communication and coordinated functioning among various brain areas. Brain development after birth consists of an ongoing process of wiring and rewiring the connections among neurons. The forming and breaking of neural connections depends directly on the child's experiences; only those connections and pathways frequently activated are retained. Children who have little opportunity to explore and experiment with their environment may fail to fully develop neural connections and pathways that facilitate later learning and thus may be at a permanent intellectual disadvantage. Further, exposure to trauma or chronic stress can make children more prone to emotional disturbances and less able to learn because they have overactive neural pathways that control the fear response, causing their brains to be organized primarily for survival. It is possible to influence disadvantaged children's development through early intervention programs as evidenced by the results of the Abecedarian Project. Communities can help families promote their children's brain development by: (1) educating them about the importance of early experience; (2) preventing abuse and neglect; (3) providing accessible quality mental health services; and (4) ensuring adequate early nutrition. Child care providers need training in devising appropriate environments, and parents need information on choosing quality child care. (Recommended readings are included. Contains 14 references.) PSO25130

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2. Wood, Chip. (1997). ***Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14. A Resource for Parents and Teachers (Second Edition).*** **Publishing Division, Northeast Foundation for Children, 71 Montague City Rd., Greenfield, MA 01301; telephone: 800-360-6332; fax: 413-772-2097; email: nefc@crocker.com ($14.95, plus $4 shipping. Discount on quantity copies).**

Expanded from its previous edition to include ages 13 and 14, this book provides teachers and parents with a quick reference on important childhood developmental issues, explaining what children should be learning and doing in the classroom at each developmental stage. The book begins by discussing how developmental issues can affect administrative and classroom decisions in the areas of mixed age grouping, ability grouping, retention, food, exercise, the structure of the school day, and racial and cultural questions. Each of the 11 chapters, one for each year, includes a narrative description and charts outlining growth patterns, classroom implications, and appropriate curriculum. The charts allow readers to identify developmental "yardsticks" for a given age. These charts outline characteristic growth patterns (physical, social, language, and cognitive) as well as what to expect in the classroom regarding vision and fine motor ability, gross motor ability, cognitive growth, and social behavior. The curriculum charts summarize the developmental continuum between ages 4 and 14, covering reading, writing, mathematics, and thematic units in social science, science, and current events. The book concludes with a list of over 100 favorite books for different ages, and resources for parents and teachers. PS025128

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3. Nunnelley, Jeanette C. (1995). ***Behavior Guidance for Three and Four Year Old Children.*** **Southern Early Childhood Association, P.O. Box 56130, Little Rock, AR 72215-6130 (SECA members, $4; Nonmembers, $5).**

Noting that obtaining desired behavior in early childhood classrooms requires an understanding of developmentally appropriate guidance, this booklet provides guidelines for preschool teachers on developmentally appropriate behavior guidance for 3- and 4-year-olds. The booklet examines various techniques for behavior guidance that encourage children to change inappropriate behaviors while enhancing their self-esteem. The booklet includes "exercises for reflection" and a Guidance Analysis Form to assist teachers in imagining how developmentally appropriate behavior guidance can be effective. Chapter 1 of the booklet examines reasons for children's misbehavior, especially loneliness and special learning needs. Chapter 2 discusses the importance of modeling appropriate behaviors. Chapter 3 presents indirect guidance techniques, including guidelines for arranging classrooms, devising class schedules, involving children in setting standards, and enhancing self-esteem. Chapter 4 examines direct guidance techniques such as "catching" children being good, helping children reduce inappropriate behaviors through positive techniques, using reflective listening accompanied by an alternative behavior, and using natural and logical consequences. Chapter 5 considers the importance of having realistic expectations for behavior change. Chapter 6 discusses ways in which families may be involved in promoting appropriate behavior. (Contains 13 references and a list of resources.) PS025124

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4. Faber, Adele, & Mazlish, Elaine. (1990). ***Liberated Parents, Liberated Children: Your Guide to a Happier Family.*** **Avon Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019; telephone: 800-762-0779 (U.S., $11; Canada, $15. Add $1.50 postage and handling).**

Based on the principles of child psychologist Dr. Haim Ginott, this book explores how the language of their responses affects parents' interactions with their children, often negatively, and how positive changes can lead the way to easier parenting and a more amenable home environment, in addition to building self-esteem, inspiring confidence, and encouraging responsibility. Following a chapter that describes the authors' experiences attending a series of Ginott's lectures on rephrasing our responses to children, the first part of the book addresses validating children's feelings, allowing a child autonomy, and using praise. This section also discusses how off-hand comments about children's behavior can become self-fulfilling roles. The second section deals with validating parents' feelings within the context of protecting the family, including guilt and anger, to improve parenting. (HTH) PS025030

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5. Healy, Jane M. (1994). ***Your Child's Growing Mind: A Practical Guide to Brain Development and Learning from Birth to Adolescence.*** **Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036; telephone: 800-323-9872; fax: 800-233-3294 (U.S., $12.95; Canada, $17.95).**

Noting that understanding a child's brain and the way it develops is the key to understanding learning, this book explores the relationship between brain physiology and children's learning processes. The book first translates the most current scientific theories on nervous-system development into practical information for parents. It then details how children develop language and memory and addresses academic learning--reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. The book also cautions against early pressure on children to read and provides scientifically documented refutation of the "superbaby" myth. The chapters are: (1) "Opening the 'Black Box'," on the importance of understanding brain development; (2) "Infancy: Creating the Foundations of Intelligence"; (3) "Children's Brains at Work: From Nursery to Schoolroom"; (4) "If the Train Is Late, Will We Miss the Boat?: Developmental Timetables and Learning to Pay Attention"; (5) "Childhood into Adolescence: Furnishing the Adult Mind"; (6) "'A Path to the Future': Hemispheres, Learning Styles, Handedness, and Gender Differences"; (7) "'Do Pigs have Wishbones?': Unfolding Language"; (8) "Tools for Learning: Intelligence, Memory, and Motivation"; (9) "Children Read with their Brains"; (10) "Thinking on Paper: Writing and Spelling"; (11) Parts into Wholes: Building Math and Science Skills"; and (12) "The Toolshed Muse: Creative Minds in Process." The selected bibliography contains 165 references, divided by chapter. PS024941

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for April 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Association for the Care of Children's Health

Founded in 1965, the Association for the Care of Children's Health (ACCH) is a network of individuals, programs, and organizations whose vision is to humanize health care for children and families through education, dissemination of resources, research, and advocacy. ACCH publishes resources that address the psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of children and their families; hosts an annual conference; conducts special activities at hospitals and community organizations; and maintains an information clearinghouse for infants with disabilities and life-threatening conditions.

Contact:

Association for the Care of Children's Health
7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 300
Bethesda, MD 20814
Telephone: 301-654-6549
Fax: 301-986-4553
Toll Free: 800-808-ACCH
URL: http://Look.net/ACCH/

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) supports families by providing a bi-monthly newsletter with practical articles on asthma and allergies. AAFA also maintains a clearinghouse of current and affordable educational materials, funds medical research, and sponsors a nationwide network of affiliated AAFA chapters.

Contact:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
1125 Fifteenth St., NW, Suite 502
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202-466-7643
Fax: 202-466-8940
Toll Free: 800-7-ASTHMA

Coalition for Quality Children's Media

The Coalition for Quality Children's Media is a national not-for-profit organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The organization was formed in 1991 by professionals in education, children's advocacy, and the video industry. Videos are reviewed, and those with no gratuitous violence or sexuality; no condescension toward children; no racial, gender, culture, or religious bias; and no physical or verbal abuse are endorsed by the coalition and coded with the phrase "KIDS FIRST!" The organization conducts workshops at national conferences and publishes a list of endorsed video titles. The list can be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below, or by sending an email request to kidsfirst@santafe.edu.

Contact:

Coalition for Quality Children's Media
535 Cordova Rd,. Suite 456
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Telephone: 505-989-8076
Fax: 505-986-8477
Email: kidsfirst@santafe.edu

The Parent Leadership Project

Created in 1988, the Parent Leadership Project is designed to provide support for parents interested in improving New York City schools, and those interested in fighting the drug problems in society. The Project provides training and assistance to parents who want to become involved leaders in the school and to parents who want to work cooperatively with teachers, administrators, and other parents.

Contact:

The Parent Leadership Project
The City University of New York
899 Tenth Ave., Room 410
New York, NY 10019
Telephone: 212-237-8425

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

Parenting Teens and Avoiding the Gap Trap

This mini-newsletter is distributed by Purdue University and contains a variety of articles of interest to teens and their parents. A recent issue has information on how to handle anger in the family and with a teenager, in addition to the names and descriptions of illegal drugs and their effects. The newsletter also has a section on turning negative words into a positive.

Cooperative Extension Service
Purdue University
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Henry County Office
206 S. 12th St.
New Castle, IN 47362

The Home School Court Report

Published by the Home School Legal Defense Association, this newsletter provides information on some of the current legal issues facing homeschoolers in the United States. Recent issues also provide an overview of pending legislation and the potential impact on families in the United States. The publication is developed primarily to provide useful information to the Home School Legal Defense Association, but a one-year subscription is available for $15 for nonmembers.

Home School Legal Defense Association
Paeonian Springs, VA 20129
Telephone: 540-338-5600

Child Care Provider Magazine

The Child Care Parent/Provider Information Network provides a variety of interesting information for the child care provider in this quarterly magazine. Recent articles include information on appropriate field trips, classroom music ideas, taming tantrums, and reviews of children's books, television, and music. Subscriptions are $20 for one year.

Child Care Provider

12435 Kemmerton Lane
Bowie, MD 20715
Telephone: 301-262-0274

Colorado Communique

Written primarily for nutrition providers within educational settings and published by the Colorado Department of Education, this newsletter provides reviews of current programming in the Colorado area, nutrition information, as well as state updates.

Colorado Department of Education
201 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203
Telephone: 303-866-6661

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Adolescence Directory On-Line

Sponsor: Center for Adolescent Studies at Indiana University

Description: The Adolescence Directory On-Line is an electronic guide to information on adolescent issues. This collection of resources is intended for parents, educators, researchers, health practitioners, and teens. Topics include: (1) Conflict and Violence, (2) Mental Health Issues, (3) Health Risks, (4) Consumer Resources, and (5) Teens Only.

Address: http://education.indiana.edu/cas/adol/adol.html

Name: Beach Center on Families and Disability

Sponsor: University of Kansas

Description: This site focuses on the families in which a family member has a disability. The site includes detailed descriptions of research projects, an online newsletter, fact sheets on families and disability, and a page of low-cost publications.

Address: http://www.lsi.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm

Name: Kids Campaigns

Description: Kids Campaigns is a resource for parents, grandparents, policymakers, media, community leaders, businesses, educators, religious leaders, children's advocates, and service providers who want to act on behalf of kids. Features include the following action areas: (1) Get Started, (2) Get Smart, and (3) Get Connected. Each of these areas contains many resources, including articles, statistics, descriptions of various organizations and programs involved, and links to related sites.

Address: http://www.kidscampaigns.org/

Name: Momness Center

Sponsor: Women's Link

Description: The Momness Center is a place for information and inspiration for moms and moms-to-be. Features include: (1) Baby Care--a collection of guides for new mothers on a variety of topics; (2) As Your Baby Grows--a month-by-month account of fetal development from conception to the first weeks after birth; (3) Chronicle of a New Mom; (4) Beautiful Mom and Mom-to-Be--information on physiological changes during pregnancy, wardrobe tips, and other advice; and (5) Baby 123--links to related sites.

Address: http://www.womenslink.com/momness/index.html

Name: Family Living Programs--Parenting the First Year

Sponsor: University of Wisconsin--Extension Family Living Programs

Description: This site has the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter, which is age-paced and research-based advice for parents about their child's first 12 months. This series is also provided in Spanish. This site will soon feature *Parenting the 2nd and 3rd Year* articles. A list of low-cost pamphlets on family topics is also provided.

Address: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/parenting/

Name: Parents and Children Together On-Line

Sponsor: Family Literacy Center, Indiana University

Description: The goal of this magazine is to further the cause of family literacy by bringing parents and children together through the magic of reading. Parents and Children Together On-line features articles and stories for children. In addition, a special section for parents features articles on issues related to children's reading and writing and book reviews of recent children's literature.

Address: http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/pcto/menu.html

Name: The National Institute of Media and the Family

Description: The National Institute for Media and the Family (NIMF) provides information to parents so they can make better media choices for their children. The goal of NIMF is to build a coalition of parents, entertainers, educators, health care providers, and business and community leaders to create a new media culture for children. The site offers parents the chance to test their media values, tips and advice, and opportunities to work with other parents. In addition, parents can read Children's Impact Statements (criteria-based evaluations of TV shows, movies, video, and computer games that children are likely to see). The Children's Impact Statements were developed with input from parents, educators, and other experts.

Address: http://www.mediaandthefamily.org/about.htm

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for May 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

Announcements

The 1997 Read*Write*Now kit will be released in May. Families can request one regular kit, and community-based tutoring programs working with children can request one camera-ready kit.

For more information, call 800-USA-LEARN.

May 10-18, 1997, is National Safe Kids Week. This event is sponsored by the National Safe Kids Campaign. During this week, the National SAFE KIDS Campaign will unveil a new initiative, SAFE KIDS Gear Up. The cornerstone of this effort is the SAFE KIDS Gear Up Guide, a visually oriented, easy-to-read booklet that illustrates the safety gear and precautions families need to use to keep children safe from injury at home, in the car, and at play. The guide will be distributed by the campaign and its more than 200 state and local coalitions at SAFE KIDS Gear Up Games in communities nationwide during National SAFE KIDS Week.

Each page of the guide focuses on a child-proofed setting where children live and play--a kitchen, bathroom, family room, nursery, garage, swimming pool, and recreational park--and the safety precautions and life-saving gear--such as child safety seats, bike helmets, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors--needed to make those areas safe for kids.

For more information, contact:

National SAFE KIDS Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1707
Telephone: 202-662-0600
Fax: 202-393-2072
Email: info@safekids.org

The Discovery Network will be rebroadcasting the Department of Education's Satellite Town Meetings, starting February 28, 1997, on The Learning Channel. The Town Meetings will air monthly on Fridays from 11 am to 12 noon (ET) as part of an ongoing series to explore how schools across the country are coping with challenges and finding solutions.

The schedule of rebroadcasts of the Satellite Town Meetings on the Learning Channel is below:

Friday, February 28, 1997

"New American High Schools: Preparing Youth for College and Careers"

Friday, March 28, 1997

"Making College More Accessible"

Friday, April 25, 1997

"School-to-Work Opportunities: Workplaces as Learning Environments"

Friday, May 23, 1997

"Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, and Other Choices in Public Education"

Friday, June 27, 1997

"Becoming a Reading, Literate Society"

Friday, July 4, 1997

"Ready to Learn: Preparing Young Children for School Success"

Conferences

CONFERENCE: Better Education Is Everybody's Business

Date: May 15-16, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: The Better Education Is Everybody's Business conference is co-sponsored by members of the Employers for Learning Steering Group of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and The Conference Board. The keynote speaker is Secretary of Education Riley, who will focus on the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the benefits for both the schools and businesses that get involved.

Contact:

The Conference Board's Customer Service Department
Telephone: 212-339-0345
Fax: 212-980-7014
Email: orders@conference-board.org

CONFERENCE: Bridging the Gap: Learning Together in the Community

Date: May 15-17, 1997

Place: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Description: The 13th Annual National Conference of the Canadian Association for Community Education is co-hosted by the Prince Edward Island Department of Education and the Youth Justice Education Partnership. This conference will interest all who are involved in the wide range of community education activities and who wish to make a difference in their community, school, or organization. This conference will provide participants with information on the various practices and strategies used to plan for and implement community education across Canada.

Contact:

Don Anderson
Community Education Coordinator
PEI Department of Education
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7N8
Telephone: 902-368-5982
Fax: 902-368-6144
Email: dranderson@gov.pe.ca

CONFERENCE: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities

Date: May 18-20, 1997

Place: Biscayne Bay Hotel; Miami, Florida

Description: Building Child and Family Friendly Communities is intended to provide a forum on best appropriate practices and services for all children and families; to build communities that value and support the diversity of families and caregivers in the nurturing of young children; to present innovation, leadership, and effective collaboration in working with and on behalf of children and families; and to showcase the most effective and highest quality services and programs for children and families.

Contact:

Luis Hernandez
Telephone: 305-375-4670

CONFERENCE: National Head Start Association

Date: May 28-31, 1997

Place: Boston, Massachusetts

Description: This is the Annual Conference of the National Head Start Association.

Contact:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St., Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone: 703-739-0875

CONFERENCE: All Children Born to Learn

Date: June 21-24, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency, St. Louis, Missouri

Description: All Children Born to Learn is the sixth annual international conference of the Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Contact:

Patti Holman or Terri Harris
Telephone: 314-432-4330

CONFERENCE: Higher Education's Role in Developing and Linking Community-Based and College Training in School-Age Care

Date: June 25-28, 1997

Place: Seattle, Washington

Description: An all-day symposium on school-age care is slated during the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development Conference. The symposium is a "call to action" for professionals in the school-age care field. Several panelists and speakers are scheduled to appear.

Contact:

NAEYC
Telephone: 800-424-2460
202-232-8777

CONFERENCE: Growing Up with Places to Go

Date: September 26-27, 1997

Place: Charlotte, North Carolina

Description: The fourth annual conference is being sponsored by the North Carolina School-Age Care Coalition. It is designed specifically for school-age care professionals who work with 9- to 15-year-olds.

Contact:

Telephone: 704-549-4803

CONFERENCE: Families, Technology, and Education Conference

Date: October 30-November 1, 1997

Place: Itasca, Illinois

Description: Just as the automobile changed family life and expectations, creating not only new opportunities but also unexpected challenges, so are new electronic technologies changing the ways we raise and educate our children. This conference will provide opportunities to reflect on the nature of current and emerging technologies and on the ways they affect family life and the education of children. The impact of the Internet, new telephone technologies, television, and other media will be the focus of discussions. Presenters at the conference will include technology experts, policymakers, program planners, educators, parents, and parenting professionals. The conference is intended to address the needs of many types of professionals who work with families, including family support personnel, educators, corporate executives, media specialists, librarians, health care specialists, publishers, and information systems developers. The conference will provide attendees with an increased awareness of the technologies available to children, families, and communities, an increased awareness of how to use technologies to serve their communities, and opportunities to interact with leaders, colleagues, and parents in order to better understand the impact of technology on family culture and children's education.

Contact:

Anne S. Robertson, Program Chair
National Parent Information Network
ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 800-583-4135
Email: arobrtsn@uiuc.edu
URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/fte/ftehome.html

Return to the Parent News for May 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for June 1997

Volume 3, Number 6

- What's New on NPIN
- June's Feature:
  A Look at the Connection between the Development of Motor Skills and Cognitive Skills
  by Debbie Reese
- Community Spotlight:
  Fathers' Day Special: Resources for Responsible Fatherhood
  by Jeff Stueve, Sean Atkinson, and Tom Rane
- Of Interest:
  - *Family Camping!*
  - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
  - *Books for Children*
  - Book Review of *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn: Creative Ideas from 35 Respected Experts*
  - *Your Child is a Natural Scientist* by Michael Glaser
  - *Getting Your Child to Sleep*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for June 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during May 1997

NPIN now has a search feature by which you can search for words in the full text of any document on NPIN. To use the search feature, return to the NPIN Home Page and choose *Search NPIN* from the menu.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following items, taken from *Business, Babies & the Bottom Line: Corporate Innovations and Best Practices in Maternal and Child Health,* have been added:

- *Purchasing Value in Maternal and Child Health Programs*
  This spotlight article discusses various resouces which evaluate the appropriateness, cost, and outcomes of maternal and child health services. These quality evaluation tools include the Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS), "Report Cards," and the Foundation for Accountability (FAcct).
- *Compelling Reasons to Invest in Maternal and Child Health*
  This spotlight article lists dozens of reasons to invest in maternal and child health, divided into the following topics: prevention, risk factors, low birth weight, Cesarean delivery, insurance, and child care.
- *Tips for Success*
  Suggests 15 tips for success in the business of providing maternal and child health, taken from business leaders from across the country.

In addition, the following digest, available in both English and Spanish, was added to the Parents and Families in Society section.

- *The Role of Parents in the Development of Peer Group Competence*.
  El Papel de los Padres en el Desarrollo de la Competencia Social
  Discusses the role of parents in helping their children to become socially-competent, well-liked playmates and companions, without being too easily influenced by ill-behaved peers. Authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parenting styles are compared, including the topics of nurturance and control.

In the Older Children, Pre-Teens, and Young Adolescents (age 9-14) section, the following items have been added:

- *El Apoyo a las Niñas en la Temprana Adolescencia*
  Results of national studies suggest that for girls, the middle grades can be a time of significant decline in self-esteem and academic achievement. This digest suggests strategies for supporting girls in the pre-adolescent and adolescent years, including ways to boost self-esteem, self-image, and body image, which often leads to greater academic achievement.
- *Bullying in Schools*
  This digest discusses the worldwide problem of bullying in schools. The extent of the problem is addressed, as well as characteristics of bullies and victims, consequences of bullying, perceptions and misconceptions of bullying, as well as a discussion of various intervention programs.

In the Teens (age 14-20) section, the following digest has been added:

- *El Apoyo a las Niñas en la Temprana Adolescencia*
  Results of national studies suggest that for girls, the middle grades can be a time of significant decline in self-esteem and academic achievement. This digest suggests strategies for supporting girls in the pre-adolescent and adolescent years, including ways to boost self-esteem, self-image, and body image, which often leads to greater academic achievement.
- *Bullying in Schools*
  This digest discusses the worldwide problem of bullying in schools. The extent of the problem is addressed, as well as characteristics of bullies and victims, consequences of bullying, perceptions and misconceptions of bullying, as well as a discussion of various intervention programs.

In the Parents and Schools as Partners section, the following digest, available in both English and Spanish, has been added:

- *Teacher-Parent Partnerships*
  Los Pactos entre Padres y Maestros
  This publication addresses the process of creating a partnership among parents and teachers, including the attributes of teachers and parents which promote partnerships, a framework for partnership, and several strategies for creating the partnerships, based on research. The article ends with a discussion of family-centered and community-oriented schools and how this relates to the teacher-parent partnetships.

In the Child Care section, the following publication has been added:

- *An Important Bond: Your Child and Caregiver*
  This publication discusses the importance of the child-caregiver bond as an supplement, but not a replacement, for the child-parent bond. Strategies are introduced to enhance the bond and help the child see the caregiver as a safe adult to which he or she can turn for support and care.

In the Early Childhood--Learning section, the following publication has been added:

- *Playgrounds: Keeping Outdoor Learning Safe*
  This publication offers six tips to keep playgrounds (and other outdoor play and learning) fun yet safe.

In the Children's Health and Nutrition section, the following publication has been added:

- *Playgrounds: Keeping Outdoor Learning Safe*

This publication offers six tips to keep playgrounds (and other outdoor play and learning) fun yet safe.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Starting Smart: How Early Experiences Affect Brain Development* from the Ounce of Prevention Fund
- *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood
- *Behavior Guidance for Three and Four Year Old Children* by Jeanette C. Nunnelley
- *Liberated Parents, Liberated Children: Your Guide to a Happier Family* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.
- *Your Child's Growing Mind: A Practical Guide to Brain Development and Learning from Birth to Adolescence* by Jane M. Healy.

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Parenting Teens and Avoiding the Gap Trap*
- *The Home School Court Report*
- *Child Care Provider Magazine*
- *Colorado Communique*

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Association for the Care of Children's Health
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
- Coalition for Quality Children's Media
- The Parent Leadership Project

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

June's Feature

A Look at the Connection Between Development of Motor Skills and Cognitive Skills

by Debbie Reese

Crawling is one of those milestones in what researchers call "motor development" that parents greet with pride. There are other, equally exciting motor skill developments, such as sitting up and, later, walking. In this article, we will examine the connection between the development of these kinds of motor skills and learning. We will begin by providing a summary of traditional parenting information about crawling and then move to a research-based discussion on the connections between motor and cognitive activity.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, babies typically crawl between 7 and 10 months of age. A first stage of crawling is often marked by the baby rocking back and forth on his hands and knees. The muscles in the arms are better developed than those in the legs, which may cause the child to go backward before he can go forward. With practice, the baby figures out that by digging in with his knees and pushing off, he can go forward. Although this pattern is common, many babies never crawl on all fours but use alternate methods such as scooting on their bottoms or creeping (wriggling) along on their bellies. Brazelton (1992) points out ***that it is a myth that babies who do not crawl are at risk for developing learning problems later on or that they perhaps lack coordination.***

Parents can encourage the development of crawling by placing attractive (and safe) objects just out of the baby's reach. As the baby becomes more agile, parents can place the baby on a textured surface to provide him with opportunities to develop tactile (touching) senses (Shelov, 1994).

As the child grows, other gross motor skills begin to develop. Early childhood educators provide 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children with opportunities to develop specific large motor skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and catching. These skills are important for social functioning because many children's games (such as tag, jump rope, or ball games) require these skills (Benelli & Yongue, 1995).

Sporns and Edelman (1993) note that coordinated motor activity makes it possible for all of us (infant, child, or adult) to explore the environment, sample, and attend to sensory stimuli. Motor coordination is not present at birth but develops gradually during the days, weeks, and months after birth. While motor development has often been looked at as a way of marking developmental milestones, researchers recognize it as significant in the development of perceptual and cognitive abilities.

It was once believed that motor development and cognitive development were not closely related. The traditional view of how the brain and muscles worked was simply that "the brain provided the instructions and the body responded" (Lockman & Thelen, 1993, p. 954). Development of motor skills was thought to be primarily a result of maturation (Bushnell & Boudreau, 1993). However, recent research is examining the ways in which motor and cognitive development are intertwined. Researchers in the field of child development now are examining the many levels of brain function and how they influence a motor act such as crawling.

Studies show that an infant will coordinate his or her motor actions with perceptual information and feedback. Bushnell and Boudreau (1993) refer to this process as "on-line" interaction between motor activity, perception, and cognition. In order for perceptual abilities to emerge, an infant must be able to engage in motor activities because he or she "makes available certain information required for the acquisition or operation of the related perceptual abilities" (p. 1017).

However, Bushnell and Boudreau (1993) are careful to point out that the information is not dependent strictly on the development of, for example, crawling ability but can be gained in other ways as well. Although it is not as efficient as crawling, other ways of being mobile (such as being in a walker) can achieve the same end (p. 1007). (Note: We are aware of the recent concerns over leaving children in walkers unattended. It should not be assumed that we advocate the use of walkers; rather, we are providing information about a research study that included a reference to the use of walkers.)

As the media devote more attention to brain development, more and more research on the relationship between acquiring motor skills and learning will make its way to the public eye, and we will continue to report on much of that research here in Parent News.

Sources:

Benelli, Cecelia, & Yongue, Bill. (1995). Supporting young children's motor skill development. *Childhood Education, 71*(4), 217-220.

Brazelton, T. Berry. (1992). *Touchpoints: The essential reference to your child's emotional and behavioral development*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bushnell, Emily W., & Boudreau, J. Paul. (1993). Motor development and the mind: The potential role of motor abilities as a determinant of aspects of perceptual development. *Child Development, 64*(4), 1005-1021.

Lockman, Jeffrey J., & Thelen, Esther. (1993). Developmental biodynamics: Brain, body, behavior connections. *Child Development, 64*(4), 953-959.

Shelov, Steven P. (Ed.). (1994). *Caring for your baby and young child: Birth to age 5*. New York: Bantam Books.

Sporns, Olaf, & Edelman, Gerald. M. (1993). Solving Bernstein's problem: A proposal for the development of coordinated movement by selection. *Child Development, 64*(4), 960-981.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Community Spotlight

Fathers' Day Special: Resources for Responsible Fatherhood

by Tom Rane, Sean Atkisson, and Jeff Stueve

June is a month for fathers to reflect upon the awesome responsibility they have toward their children. Being a responsible father not only means recognizing paternity but also behaving in such a way as to give our children the needed knowledge and abilities for their future as adults. In today's changing and diverse world, fathers fulfill this responsibility in many different ways ranging from working long hours at a job to reading bedtime stories.

While public support for being a father has increased, so have the expectations for fatherhood. During previous generations, the main role for most fathers was to provide the financial support and protection for the family. Historically, fathers may have been involved with guiding or disciplining their children, but they were typically not expected to participate in daily childrearing activities, such as bathing, feeding, or participating in their child's activities. Today's fathers and mothers may be expected to perform a wider range of roles, and it is not unusual for both parents to have difficulty balancing their work and family commitments. However, it may be particularly hard for fathers to ask for help when they are experiencing difficulty because of these traditional roles that expect the father to protect the family and handle adversity when it occurs.

Fathers may also be faced with helping their children cope with problems that previous generations would have never dreamed possible when they were growing up. Now, more than ever, fathers need a variety of resources that can assist them in their efforts to be responsible. The growth in the fathering movement over the past few years has provided many possibilities for support. Some fathers feel more comfortable becoming involved on the Internet with a network that discusses parenting issues, while others may prefer a group that meets regularly at a local community center. Still others may find that their work environment offers family support and parenting education. The following resources reflect the multiple domains of responsible fathering and the varied array of personal, relational, and ecological factors that influence men as fathers. It is important for all fathers to know that there are resources available to enhance and support the complex, difficult, yet rewarding job of parenting and family life.

Local Resources for Fathers

Many local communities have a variety of resources for fathers. Some examples are provided below.

- **Libraries.** Local libraries often have, or are willing to locate, books, magazines, and videos that may be useful for fathers.

- **Religious Organizations.** Another potential resource for fathers is a local church or religious organization.

  For example, the Canaan Missionary Baptist Church, in Urbana, IL holds men's group meetings that focus on "all aspects of being a man, including fatherhood," according to Rev. Harold Davis, Assistant Pastor. The group meets Saturday mornings at 8:30. The church has held meetings since 1980

  For more information about these meetings, contact:

  Canaan Missionary Baptist Church
  402 W. Main
  Urbana, IL 61801
  Telephone: (217) 367-2158

  The First Presbyterian Church of Champaign offers Fall and Spring classes on Active Parenting for parents of children from infants to teens. Patty and Bruce Farthing have played a key role in developing the church's program.

  For more information about these classes, contact:

  The First Presbyterian Church of Champaign
  302 W. Church St.
  Champaign, IL 61820
  Telephone: (217) 356-7238.

National Organizations with Local Affiliations

There are also several national organizations, which encourage responsible fathering, that have local affiliations which can be a resource. Two examples are listed below.

- *Promise Keepers* - Philip Hoggatt, Chairman of the East Central Illinois Promise Keepers Task Force, is a local representative of the national Christian men's organization, Promise Keepers. A local group of men who have been influenced by Promise Keepers meet monthly for a breakfast. The focus of the breakfast meetings is being or becoming responsible fathers.

  For more information, please contact:

  Philip Hoggatt Telephone: 217-367-7773 or 217-351-2746.

- *The National Council of African American Men (NCAAM)* - Another group that seeks to promote responsible fathering is the local chapter of The National Council of African American Men. Its leader, Robert Walker, Sr., calls responsible African American fathers our society's "invisible fathers." He and the NCAAM are working both to encourage more attention on this group in the media and scholarship and to offer African American children and youth positive models of African American men.

  For more information, please contact:

  Mr. Robert Walker

3507 S. Prospect Ave.
Champaign, IL 61821
Telephone: (217) 359-8160

Resources on the Web

In addition to the numerous resources which you may in your areas. the Internet is full of sources that fathers can access from their own homes.

Fathermag

An Internet magazine for and about fathers which has won numerous awards, including the Reader's Digest "Look Smart" award.

URL: http://www.fathermag.com

National Fatherhood Initiative

The mission of the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with loving, committed and responsible fathers.

URL: http://www.register.com/father/

Fathernet

This site provides information on the importance of fathers and fathering and how fathers can be good parents and parent educators. It includes research, policy and opinion documents to inform users about the factors that support and hinder men's involvement in the lives of children.

URL: http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/Fathernet/index.html

National Fathers' Network

The National Fathers' Network (NFN) advocates for and provides resources and support to all men who have children with special health care needs.

URL: http://www.fathersnetwork.org/

At-Home Dad

At-Home Dad is devoted to providing connections and resources for fathers who stay home with their children. It was created by a father who became an at-home Dad after he was laid off from his job.

URL: http://www.parentsplace.com/readroom/athomedad/index.html

National Centering for Fathering

The Center was founded in 1990 by Dr. Ken Canfield to conduct research on fathers and fathering and to develop practical resources for dads in nearly every fathering situation.

URL: http://www.fathers.com/

The Father's Forum

A page designed to offer new and expectant fathers opportunities to explore the many facets of parenthood. It contains lots of information on infant development.

URL: http://www.parentsplace.com/readroom/fathers/index.html

Fathering Bibliography

This is a collection of references on father, father absence, father involvement, and other issues in which the father plays a key role.

URL: http://hd.wsu.edu/publications/fathering/famenu.html

FatherWork

Personal stories from fathers and children and ideas to promote good fathering under various challenging circumstances.

URL: http://fatherwork.byu.edu

Authors' note: Thanks to Thomas Moore, Director of Psychological Services at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for information regarding local resources.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

Family Camping!

Warm summer days and nights make us think of a popular summertime activity - camping! Some think "camping" means backpacking deep into a forest and sleeping in a tent, while others think of fully equipped recreational vehicles. Whatever your preference, most children love to camp.

While we typically think of camping as simply fun, involving your children in the organization and planning stages of your trip provides them with an opportunity to practice skills they have learned in school. For example, parents can print the list of supplies and ask their children to read the list (reading skills), locate the items in store aisles, and sort the items into appropriate boxes (categorization skills). If maps will be used to travel to a campground, children can practice map-reading skills as they help plan the route, and math skills as they calculate how far away the campground is and how long it will take to get there. Packing groceries can also provide practice in estimating ("how many cans of beans will we need to feed six hungry people?").

Margaret Monteran, in *Family Camping 101: Tips, Hints and Resources*, suggests that families may want to prepare for their first camping experience by camping in the backyard. This strategy allows the family to practice setting up the tent, rolling up sleeping bags, etc. All campers, adults and children alike, should have a pack of their own to store their personal gear, water, snacks, and other essentials such as a pocket pack of tissue paper (Monteran, 1994).

Remember to take along a fully equipped first-aid kit that includes insect repellent and preparations to relieve itching due to poison ivy or insect bites. Be sure you include a good sunscreen and lip balm.

Finally, campfire stories are terrific fun - and also educational! Before the trip, each family member can visit the library, select a story, and learn it well enough to tell to the family as you sit around the fire.

For More Information:

The Happy Camper Handbook: A Guide to Camping for Kids and Their Parents by Michael Elsohn Ross (Yosemite National Park, CA: Yosemite Associates, 1995)

Kids Camp!: Activities for the Backyard or Wilderness by Laurie M. Carlson and Judith Dammel (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1995)

Kids Outdoors: Skills and Knowledge for Outdoor Adventures by Victoria Logue, Frank Logue, and Mark Carroll (Camden, ME: Ragged Mountain Press, 1996)

The Camper's and Backpacker's Bible by Thomas E. Huggler (New York: Doubleday, 1995)

Camping in the 90s: Tips, Techniques and Secrets by Victoria Logue (Birmingham, AL: Menasha Ridge

Press, 1995)

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hiking, Camping, and the Great Outdoors by Michael Mouland (New York: Alpha Books, 1996)

Cooking Aboard Your RV by Janet Groene (Camden, ME: Ragged Mountain Press, 1993)

Easy Camping in Northern California, 1996-97: 100 Places Anyone Can Camp This Weekend by Tom Stienstra (San Francisco, CA: Foghorn Press, 1997)

Source:

Monteran, Margaret. (1994). *Family camping 101: Tips, hints and resources*. Glen Allen, VA: Monteran Online Bookstore. (Excerpts available online: http://members.aol.com/monteran/familyfun/desfc101.html).

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter 11: Commercials and the Television Business (see previous issues for Chapters 1-10).

For many years, TV advertisers have produced commercials that are designed to attract and hold the attention of children of all ages. As a result, there has been increasing controversy regarding whether these commercials are fair since they are intended to persuade children who are not mature enough to critically evaluate the messages presented.

According to these researchers, many parents have expressed frustration over the persuasive power of TV commercials, and they find it difficult to deal with their children's repeated requests for food and toys they have seen advertised. Nonetheless, while research has shown that advertising strongly influences a child's desire for various products, parents can still modify their children's response to commercials. In addition, it has been found that as children mature they tend to become increasingly skeptical about commercials. However, it is only when they understand the purposes of advertising and the techniques that are used to enhance products that they can critically evaluate what the commercials actually say, what they leave out, and what they subtly imply.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide basic information about why there are commercials on TV, the different kinds of commercials, and how children can learn to view television commercials critically. It is also hoped that this chapter will be helpful to adult readers who are not always as analytic about TV commercial messages as they ought to be.

Every hour of television is carefully planned to have enough minutes for "commercial messages." By selling commercial minutes to advertisers, TV station owners are able to defray the costs of their programs. And commercials are a bargain for advertisers, in spite of costing thousands of dollars for every half minute, because it would cost much more to send a letter to the same number of people.

Children have been found to watch an average of 19,000 to 20,000 commercials each year. While most assume that their children understand the purpose of advertising, research has shown that children cannot even distinguish between commercials and television programs. In several studies by communication specialists Scott Ward, Daniel Wackman, and Ellen Wartella of several hundred children in kindergarten, third, and fifth grades, the majority of the kindergarteners were found to not know what a TV commercial was, although many could describe that commercials were shorter than programs. However, they did not understand why commercials were shown on TV or what they were attempting to do. The third- and fifth-graders were more knowledgeable, although they did not fully understand the purpose of commercials.

The federal agency responsible for regulating television commercials is the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC has been actively involved in the controversy about TV advertising directed at children. They have found that the amount of time devoted to commercials on children's TV has ranged from 9-12 minutes each hour during the last decade. In 1978, the FTC stated that it is "unfair and deceptive" to address commercials for any product to children who are too young to understand the selling purpose of commercials.

When children watch commercials on TV, it is important for them to understand that these ads have one purpose: They want the viewer to remember the product and then to buy it. Thus, it is important to help your children see how the advertisers hint at other ideas in order to persuade them to buy it. The ideas include using celebrities to endorse products, making claims that some products are beneficial to health and athletic abilities, and depicting several toys at the same time although each must be bought individually.

The most important point to teach your children is that commercials tell people to buy what the advertiser is selling, and that commercials bring money for programs. Help your children be aware of what the advertiser wants them to buy and to decide for themselves if it is something they really want or need. Encourage them to consider the merits of the product and to look for ways that special effects are used to make things look bigger than they really are, or better, or more fun.

Discussion Ideas

Ask your children if they have ever bought anything because of how it looked on TV. How was it different than was expected? Was that fair? What can we do about it?

For older children (8 to 12), go over the four types of advertisement listed below. Try to point out an example of each when you watch television.

1. Commercials. These advertisements pay for the programs and try to sell any kind of product.
2. Political Advertisements. These talk about a person running for an elective office and try to convince people to vote for him or her. The candidate pays the network for the time, so these also help pay for the program.
3. Promotional Advertisements. A network or station advertises programs in order to attract a larger audience.
4. Public Service Announcements (PSAs). The government tells the networks that they must show these announcements for free. A PSA will give information or try to change people's ideas and behaviors (such as anti-drug or anti-smoking messages).

Activities

1. While watching TV during the weekend, use a chart to keep a record of the number of commercials or the amount of time used by commercials (All ages).
    1. How many TV commercials do you watch every day? Next time you watch TV, keep track of the number of commercials for a half-hour program by writing the name of each product advertised.
    2. How much time did you spend watching TV commercials? Next time you watch TV, use a watch or clock with a second hand and keep track of the number of minutes spent on

commercials for a half-hour program. Write down the name of the program. Note: Most commercials are 15, 30, or 60 seconds.

2. Think of one commercial that made you think a product was better than it really was.
3. List the products on TV commercials that are related to beautifying people (makeup, toothpaste, appliances). Which commercials are exaggerated? Which commercials are "honest?"
4. List the products on TV commercials that are related to eating (food, drink, candy). Which commercials are exaggerated? Which commercials are honest?
5. List the products on TV commercials that are related to play (toys, games). Which commercials are exaggerated? Which commercials are honest?
6. Write down the subject of a public service announcement or political advertisement that you saw on television this week.
7. Think of ways to reword or demonstrate one of the following messages so that all children would understand it: "Each sold separately," "Assembly required," "Batteries not included."
8. Think of commercials that do not really tell us what a product is like. For example, what do Michael Jackson commercials tell us about the taste of Pepsi-Cola?

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

Books for Children

This month's listing contains children's books on toilet training, sleeping, and camping. The books are available at local libraries and bookstores.

Toilet Training

Bye-Bye Diapers by Ellen Weiss, illustrated by Tom Cook, from the Muppet Babies Big Steps series (published in 1991 by Western Publishing Co., Racine, WI).

Dry Days, Wet Night by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Kathy Parkinson (published in 1994 by Whitman, Morton Grove, IL).

Going to the Potty by Fred Rogers (A Mr. Rogers' First Experience book published in 1986 by Putnam, New York).

The Princess and the Potty by Wendy Cheyette Lewison (published in 1994 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, New York).

Sleep

Dreams written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats (published in 1992 by Aladdin Books, New York).

I'm Not Sleepy written and illustrated by Denys Cazet (published in 1992 by Orchard Books, New York).

Lights Out! written and illustrated by John Himmelman (published in 1995 by Troll Associates, Mahwah, NJ).

The Napping House by Audrey Wood, illustrated by Don Wood (published in 1996 by Harcourt Brace & Co., San Diego, CA).

Six Sleepy Sheep by Jeffie Ross Gordon, illustrated by John O'Brien (published in 1991 by St. Martin's Press, New York).

Camping

101 Wacky Camping Jokes by Melvin Berger (published in 1997 by Scholastic, New York).

Amelia Bedelia Goes Camping written by Peggy Parish, illustrated by Lynn Sweat (published in 1997 by Avon, New York).

Amos Camps Out: A Couch Adventure in the Woods by Susan Seligson, illustrated by Howie Schneider (published in 1992 by Little, Brown, Boston).

The Big Alfie Out of Doors Storybook written and illustrated by Shirley Hughes (published in 1992 by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

Book Review: *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn: Creative Ideas from 35 Respected Experts*

Edited by Betty Farber, M.Ed.
Foreword by Nancy Balaban, Ed.D.

Book Review by Harriet Heath, Director of the Parent Center, Thorne School Child Study Institute, Bryn Mawr College, PA

"The easiest most effective way to educate a young child is to teach her what she wants to learn when she wants to learn it, and to make sure the material is presented in a tangible and entertaining manner" (p. 260). And that is the basic philosophy of this book. With all the gimmicks currently available in our culture that supposedly help children learn, it is good to have a book that brings us back to this basic premise.

Betty Farber has gathered articles that she originally published in her monthly newsletter, *Parent and Preschooler*. The articles are readable, concise, and full of ideas. Parents, teachers, and child care providers can easily look up an area of interest. They will find a theoretical discussion about the issue with practical ideas for dealing with it. A typical example concerns helping children learn to love to write. The article is made up of a series of letters a child wrote to her grandmother from the ages of 2 to 5. The parent added comments as was necessary to convey the child's meaning. Children love to learn writing, and the article illustrates a method of fulfilling that need through letters from a child to her grandmother.

This is the beauty of the book. It identifies what toddlers and preschoolers need to be learning in preparation for school. It draws from the everyday activities that go on in home or in preschool settings. It connects the two and explains how the everyday activities prepare the child. Each section includes a list of references, relevant books, and activities. Chapter 8 is a typical example of what an article offers. It summarizes the benefits of play. The summary includes the points of view of the major theorists on play and a review of developmental patterns. Following the summary are suggestions as to how parents can facilitate their children's play. The section ends with a list of relevant books for both parents and children. (Sections in the book cover these topics: *How Young Children Learn; Language Development; Reading-Writing-Arithmetic; Sharing Literature; Imagination-Creativity; Music-Movement-Art; Science-Nature; Trips with Your Preschooler; School; Computers.*)

The philosophy of child development behind these articles is one that needs to be reiterated for every generation of parents. It views children as curious and parents as having an important role in satisfying their curiosity. Children are seen as seeking to explore their world and to understand how it works. Parents-following their children's explorations and understanding how children develop-expand their children's experiences. They can provide that extra emphasis to their child's experiences that can give additional meaning and insight. These articles follow this philosophy regardless of the topic-whether it is mathematical concepts or the enjoyment of dance and movement.

It is great to have a book to recommend to parents and teachers that so naturally describes children and parents learning and having fun together. In addition, so much of that fun takes place during the course of everyday family living. The illustrations throughout the book reinforce the idea that adults and children can have fun learning together. They catch the delightful interactions between children and their parents and caregivers that the writing describes. The book is an excellent resource for parents, teachers, and child care providers.

> This review is reprinted with permission. *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn: Creative Ideas from 35 Respected Experts* is published by Preschool Publications, Inc. $24.95 per book plus shipping. To order by credit card, call toll-free: 800-879-4214. Send all other orders and queries to Preschool Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888, or by fax to 516-765-4927.

A chapter from the book is excerpted in this month's *Parent News*: "Your Child Is a Natural Scientist." (next article)

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

Chapter 33: Your Child is a Natural Scientist

by Michael Glaser

The following chapter is reprinted with permission from *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn: Creative Ideas from 35 Respected Experts*, © Preschool Publications, Inc. 1997. $24.95 per book plus shipping. Credit card orders call toll-free: 800-879-4214. Send all other orders and queries to Preschool Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888, or by fax to 516-765-4927.

Your preschooler is a curious child...He is discovering. He is observing. He is questioning.

Your preschooler is a curious child. He is a natural scientist. Long before he learns to talk, long before he learns to walk, he is thinking like a scientist. He is discovering. He is observing. He is questioning. From the moment your child is born, he is desperately trying to make some sense out of the bewildering world around him.

Encouraging Your Child's Curiosity

You, as a parent, have the good fortune to assist in this scientific discovery. It's up to you to provide a laboratory. Let her experiment with things that roll, things that bounce, things that bend. (Like it or not, she will also experiment with things that tear and things that break!) Help her to understand the things she sees. Encourage her curiosity.

Sometimes, it isn't easy. Your preschooler will rejoice in the discovery that a coffee can makes a wonderfully loud sound. She may deduce that a cookie tin will too. As a scientist, she has to test her deduction. Over and over again. The louder the better. Science sure is fun.

While you may need to control your youngster's curiosity a little, it is important that you don't discourage it entirely. Curiosity, and science, will take your child a long way toward learning about the world.

Observing, Organizing, and Comparing

Science is a way of looking at things. It is a way of organizing knowledge and reorganizing it again when the evidence demands it. Science requires careful observation and critical thinking. It demands, and encourages, an open mind.

Help your child to look closely at things. Help him to compare things. Look at plants. Look at animals. How are they the same? How are they different? Help him sort things into groups. Give him the chance to sort things (like shells or leaves or blocks) his own way and to explain his criteria. Did he sort them by size, by shape, by color, or some other special way? Encourage him to try different criteria. Help him to see that there is more than one "right" answer. Science encourages creativity.

Let your young child experiment with all sorts of things. Magnets are exciting. Water is fascinating. Flashlights and balloons, magnifiers and straws all invite inquiry.

Using Resources

Use the resources available in your town or city. A nearby nature center or science museum will surely be an enriching experience for your child. A park or a beach or a backyard should offer enough riddles to last a lifetime. Your local library, of course, is an invaluable resource. Many fine children's books will motivate your youngster to find out more about nature and science. Many more books are available to help answer questions.

Don't be afraid of science. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Say it, though, in a way that encourages further inquiry. Encourage your child to keep wondering. Your child was born with that sense of wonder. It is up to you to nurture it, to enjoy it, and to treasure it.

Science Toys

While some materials for science activities may be found around the house or outdoors, others may be purchased in a science or toy store. Also, toy catalogs can be a good resource when you want to buy science toys. Here is a sampling of science toys from recent catalogs:

- adventure kit for exploring (adjustable belt includes compass, whistle, canteen, telescope, and flashlight).
- ant farm
- baby's first mirror
- big binoculars
- bug study kit (with 2-way magnifier, screened-in bug house, and bug book)
- dinosaurs: authentically detailed vinyl dinosaurs, dinosaur puzzles, dinosaur kites
- flashlight that works without batteries
- luminous universe stickers to stick on your child's ceiling
- magnets: magnetic block set, magnetic marbles
- measuring tape with big numbers
- musical instruments
- redwood seedlings to plant indoors or out
- super ears to hear distant sounds
- wrist walkie-talkie
- young explorer backpack
- young naturalist guide to nature
- zoo animals, realistically colored vinyl figures

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.

Parent News for June 1997

Of Interest

Getting Your Child To Sleep

The following suggestions come from T. Berry Brazelton's *Touchpoints: The Essential Reference to Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development* (published in 1992 by Addison-Wesley). He is careful to say that helping your child develop self-comforting rituals for sleep will be a long and possibly difficult process. Although he offers guidelines, he is also careful to say that each situation is different and you as the parent should bear this in mind when implementing his guidelines.

Brazelton's guidelines include:

- Look at the child's day. Is she sleeping too long or too late in the afternoon? Babies older than a year should sleep one to two hours at most, beginning at approximately 1:00.
- Establish a relaxing, nurturing bedtime routine. Roughhousing is OUT, story time is IN.
- Get the child quiet, put him in his bed, and sit by him to assist with learning a comforting pattern. Pat, assure, and encourage with a "you can do it yourself" type of voice.
- Encourage her use of a particular "lovey" (Brazelton's word for special soft toy or blanket) as part of her self-comforting routine. A single special toy is better than many.
- Expect him to rouse and cry out every 3 to 4 hours. Greet this waking with as little stimulating intervention as possible. Don't take him out of bed to rock him. Instead, soothe and rub his back (side, legs, etc.) with your hand, but leave him in the bed. Stand by the bed, and tell him in an encouraging voice that he can fall asleep again himself, and that he will learn to do it.
- After doing this for a period of time, begin to stay out of the room when the child calls, calling to the child instead, saying that you are there and you care, but suggest she use her lovey.
- If the child doesn't settle down after 15 minutes of waiting for him to use the lovey (or any self-comforting behaviors the child may develop such as rocking), you may enter the room. But be brief! Pat and reassure the child verbally that he can fall back asleep. Encourage him to use the lovey.

Brazelton is careful to say this will be a difficult process, but that it will be rewarding for both child and parents in the end. He also says to give the child lots of credit during the day for her nighttime accomplishments.

He also believes that 9- to 11-month-old babies will start wakening at night with each new motor task (standing, cruising, walking) because the excitement associated with the tasks carries over and surfaces during light sleep. You may find the child will repeatedly stand right after you lay him down, just because he now knows how to pull himself up! It is a great new skill for him and he wants to do it again and again!

During the periods when new skills are developing that will have an impact on light sleep periods, it is especially important to be consistent with bedtime rituals. The American Academy of Pediatrics published a book in 1993 called *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5, The Complete and Authoritative Guide* (Shelov, 1993). The suggestions for getting children to sleep are much like those offered by Brazelton, with the difference that they suggest waiting 5 minutes (rather than 15) before you go back into the child's room. Here are some additional ideas on various approaches to sleep problems in young children taken from Barbara Huntley's *The Sleep Book for Tired Parents: Help for Solving Children's Sleep Problems* (Huntley, 1991).

Moving from general to specific in terms of identifying sleep problems, Huntley's book begins with a chapter called "Sleepless Nights" in which she helps parents determine if they do, indeed, have a sleep problem. In the next two chapters, Huntley discusses the basics of sleep and trouble spots that may interrupt sleep. Chapter 4 is devoted to four approaches to dealing with sleep difficulties: "The Family Bed Approach," the "Cry It Out Approach," "The Teaching in Small Steps Approach," and "The Living with It Approach." Each approach has many pros and cons, and each approach is workable.

- The Family Bed Approach: This is the practice in which parent(s) and child all sleep together in the same bed. This term is used to describe a range of patterns, from sleeping in the same bed for the entire night, to sleeping together only until the child falls asleep, to allowing the child to come to the parents' bed during the night and remaining until morning.
- The Cry It Out Approach: This method is driven by the idea that children will learn desired sleep patterns as long as undesirable patterns are not reinforced. Basically, the child is left to cry until he falls asleep.
- The Teaching in Small Steps Approach: In this method, Huntley says the child will learn the new sleep behavior best when it is presented gradually over a long period of time. Given time and support, the child will develop his own resources and style for getting to sleep.
- The Living with It Approach: Parents make a conscious decision that the situation as it exists is the most appropriate solution for the time being, and they make the best of that situation.

The fifth chapter in Huntley's book provides tips on how to implement an approach once you have decided which is best for your situation.

Other resources that may be helpful for this concern include:

Becoming Better Parents by Maurice Balson (Camberwell, Melbourne, Australia: Acer, 1994).

The Difficult Child by Stanley Turecki (New York: Bantam Books, 1985).

Sources:

Brazelton, T. Berry. (1992). *Touchpoints: The essential reference to your child's emotional and behavioral development.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Huntley, Rebecca. (1991). *The sleep book for tired parents: Help for solving children's sleep problems.* Seattle, WA: Parenting Press.

Shelov, Steven P. (Ed.). (1994). *Caring for your baby and young child: Birth to age 5*. New York: Bantam Books.

This summary was prepared by the National Parent Information Network staff.

For more information please contact:

The National Parent Information Network
University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386
URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/npinhome.html

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

How to Do Homework without Throwing Up

Written for children, but fun for adults, this manual provides a lighthearted way of looking at homework particularly if homework makes you uneasy or queasy. Some of the tips include developing a homework schedule, getting help with your homework, homework friendly snacks, and prioritizing your work. Cost $8.95

Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
400 First Ave. North, Suite 616
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Telephone: 612-338-2068
Email: help4kids@freespirit.com

Off to a Good Start as Your Child Enters Kindergarten

Published by Project Enlightenment, this manual provides tips for parents with children entering kindergarten. These include information on registering their child, encouraging school adjustment, skills that children may need prior to entering kindergarten, and how to deal with both the child's and parent's feelings about entering school. There is also a description of what is contained in an effective kindergarten.

For more information about this and other resources available through Project Enlightenment, please contact:

Project Enlightenment
Wake County Public School System
501 S. Boylan Ave.
Raleigh, NC 27603

Raising Confident, Competent Daughters: Strategies for Parents

This guide offers strategies for adolescent girls on topics such as "Finding Her Voice," "My Daughter, The Physicist?," "The Power of Peers," and "My Daughter and Sports." Published by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS), the authors encourage parents and educators to become partners in this process.

For more information on this and other resources available through NCGS, please contact:

The National Coalition of Girls' Schools
228 Main St.
Concord, MA 01742
Telephone: 508-287-4485
URL: http://www.tiac.net/users/ncgs
Email: ncgs@ncgs.org

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Shulman, Shmuel; Seiffge-Krenke, Inge. (1997). ***Fathers and Adolescents: Developmental and Clinical Perspectives.*** **Routledge, Distribution Center, 7625 Empire Dr., Florence, KY 41042 ($18.95, plus shipping).**

The family and men's roles within it are changing; noncustodial fathers, stepfathers, and absent fathers are commonplace. This book examines the relationships of fathers with their adolescent sons, and daughters, in the context of a changing society. Chapter 1 explores both the historical and the changing role of fathers in the development of their children. Chapter 2 explores the role of the father in the separation-individuation process of the adolescent, while chapter 3 deals more specifically with the role fathers play in the attainment of developmental tasks. Chapters 4 and 5 address the distinctive nature of the relationships that father share with their maturing sons and daughters. Paternal attitudes toward their male and female children are integrated with broader perceptions of sons and daughters and evident in historical and cultural contexts. Chapter 6 discusses the relationships of custodial and noncustodial fathers with their adolescents, emphasizing the potential risk of a too close or too distant father. Chapters 7 addresses the issues of stepfathers and their adolescent stepchildren. The remaining chapters explore relationships under nonoptimal conditions. Chapter 8 discusses the conditions of fathers whose adolescents are chronically ill. Chapter 9 focuses on the role of fathers in adolescent psychopathology, while chapter 10 deals with both the aggression of fathers toward their children and the role of fathers in the development of their children's aggressive behavior. Chapter 11 deals more specifically with the dynamics related to father-daughter and father-son incest and the long-standing effects of incest on subsequent development. The concluding chapter discusses the psychological and family-systemic reasons why fathers' parenting behavior continues to be different from that of mothers. Overall the book notes that fathers interact in ways that are different from those of mothers, but that are important for both normal and disturbed adolescent development. Includes a 452-item bibliography. PS025194

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2. van Gulden, Holly; Bartels-Rabb, Lisa M. (1993). ***Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child.*** **Crossroad Publishing, Spring Arbor Distributors, 815 Industrial Rd., Newport, TN 37821; telephone: 800-395-7234 ($14.95, plus shipping).**

Parenting an adopted child is, for the most part, the same as parenting any other child, but it is different in some unique and critical ways related to the child's separation from birth parents and genetic roots. Understanding how a child interprets, understands, and feels about adoption, and why, can help the parent guide the adopted child struggling with issues of his or her adoption. Intended to help adoptive parents help their children, and identify when to seek professional help for resolving emotional issues, this book explores issues of adoption and adjustment for both adopted children and adoptive parents. Chapters in the first section of the book examine characteristics of parenting adopted children, such as bonding, grief and loss, and pre-placement and post-placement stress on the parents. Chapters in the second section explore developmental stages of childhood from early infancy through preschool, middle years, and adolescence. Each of these chapters includes discussion of the family life cycle for that age level, the impact of placement at this age, and how to address difficulties in adjustment. Additional chapters in this section assess the influence of adoption on school performance, examine adoption issues in adulthood, and discuss family factors contributing to a successful adoption. Each chapter includes sources for further reading. PS025175

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3. Alston, Frances Kemper. (1992). ***Caring for Other People's Children: A Complete Guide to Family Day Care.*** **Teachers College Press, P.O. Box 20, Williston, VT 05495-0020 ($19.95).**

As more two-salary families join the already large number of working single parents, and more people want to stay at home with their children but need a steady source of income, family day care-caring for other people's children in one's home-is often viewed as the answer to both trends. This guide and resource manual specifically for family day care providers offers information for providers to plan, start, and run a successful day care business in the home. Areas covered include: day care space; caring for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children; providing for special needs children; planning activities; interacting with parents; running a small business; nutrition; and discipline. PS024913

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4. Greenman, Jim. (1990). ***Best for My Baby: Low-Income Parents and the Struggle to Do the Right Thing. Facilitator's Guide.*** **Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, 1628 Elliot Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55404 ($69; includes 30-minute VHS video tape).**

Noting that like all parents, low-income parents need support more than unsolicited "how-to" advice, this guide and video explore issues of being a good parent under less than ideal circumstances. The facilitator's guide provides a framework for parenting discussion group leaders to use the "Best for My Baby" video. The guide provides a synopsis of the video, considerations for introducing the showing of the video, questions to facilitate discussion, and notes on potential problems that may arise in discussion groups. The video, which may also be used to train professionals, teachers, child care staff, and other parent workers, is designed for classes and parent support groups helping parents to get off to a good start. The 32-minute video presents low-income parents discussing their struggles to provide the best care, guidance, and learning experiences for children under 3 years of age, with the conviction that everyone has the potential to provide the best for their babies. Among the issues explored are: (1) realistic expectations for children and family life; (2) guidance that teaches (developmentally appropriate discipline); (3) respect for the child as a full human being; (4) respect for what the child can do and what the parents can do; and (5) available help and support. PS024732

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5. Ames, Louise Bates, et al. (1989). ***Your Ten- to Fourteen-Year-Old*****, Dell Publishing, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036 (U.S., $11.95; Canada, $16.95).**

Although the basic growth changes for teenagers are the same as they were 20 or 30 years ago, the environment in which these changes occur has greatly changed. This book describes the characteristic changes in human behavior that take place from year to year between the ages of 10 and 14. Part 1 of the book describes the authors' longitudinal research, which allowed a comparison of teenagers today with those during the 1970s. Part 2 of the book presents maturity profiles and maturity traits-in areas including emotions, school life, and ethical sense--for adolescents in each year from ages 10 through 14. Part 3 of the book presents trends in each of the maturity trait areas, and related growth gradients, including likes and dislikes, same-sex friends, risk behaviors, and teacher-child relationships. Part 4 discusses briefly developmental changes that occur during ages 15 and 16. Sources of information, tables of findings from the study, and chapter notes are appended. PS024942

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Consortium for School Networking

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) is a nonprofit organization designed to promote and encourage the use of telecommunications by teachers in K-12 classrooms. The organization provides an opportunity for individuals to utilize a national network of experts in educational telecommunications, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and provides online discussion forums. CoSN is a clearinghouse on Goals 2000 State Plans for integrating technology.

Contact:

Consortium for School Networking
1555 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-1103
Telephone: 202-466-6296
Fax: 202-462-9043
Email: info@cosn.org
URL: http://www.cosn.org

Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy

The Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy is dedicated to advancing public policy choices that reduce hunger and poverty and enhance the development and productive capacities of American families and children. The Center conducts policy research and analysis and works with governmental leaders and the media. It publishes a monthly newsletter and various publications on hunger and poverty issues.

Contact:

Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy
School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Tufts University
11 Curtis Ave.
Medford, MA 02155
Telephone: 617-627-3956
Fax: 617-627-3020

Cuban American National Council

The Cuban American National Council (CNC) is a private nonprofit agency established in 1972 to help Cuban Americans and other minorities identify their economic, social, and educational needs and to help them adjust to American society. The CNC Educational Initiative sponsors alternative middle schools for at-risk students in Dade County. The schools are intended to prepare students to return to the regular classroom. CNC conducts research on social and policy issues that affect Cuban Americans and other Hispanic populations, provides leadership training, and sponsors an annual national conference.

Contact:

Cuban American National Council, Inc.
300 SW 12th Ave., Third Floor
Miami, FL 33130-2038
Telephone: 305-642-3484
Fax: 305-642-7463

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

Adoptive Families

Providing a variety of articles and information for adoptive families, this bimonthly magazine is published by Adoptive Families of America, Inc. (AFA). AFA is a private, nonprofit organization of families and individuals that provides problem-solving assistance and information about the challenges of adoption. AFA promotes the health and welfare of children without permanent families. Recent articles include information about international adoptions, medical issues, and sibling concerns. There is also a regular section that discusses the ages and stages of adopted children and issues they may face at each stage ($24.95 per year).

Adoptive Families
2309 Como Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55208
Toll-free: 800-372-3300

Our Children: The National PTA Magazine

Published five times yearly by the National Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), this magazine has informative articles on issues that concern parents and educators. A recent issue focused on concerns such as school reform and parents, grades and assessments, the PTA's position on parental involvement, and advocacy. Regular features include legislative updates related to education ($15.00 per year for nonmembers, $10.00 per year for members).

Our Children
National PTA
330 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3690

Twin Services Reporter: Multiple Birth News

The Twin Services Reporter newsletter is published four times a year by Twin Service, Inc., a nonprofit agency founded in California in 1978. The agency is dedicated to providing resources and expertise for U.S. parents of multiples. The Reporter is a benefit of membership.

Twin Service
P.O. Box 10066
Berkeley, CA 94709
Telephone: 510-524-0863
URL: http://www.parentsplace.com
Email: Twinservices@juno.com

The National Report on Work & Family

Providing news on legislation, litigation, and employer policies, this newsletter is published 25 times a year. A current issue covers topics such as work/family bills in both the House and Senate, Supreme Court rulings on work/family related concerns, and the positions of various Representatives on the bills being reviewed ($497 per year).

Business Publishers, Inc.
951 Pershing Dr.
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4464
Toll-free: 800-274-6737

Potpourri

Potpourri is a monthly publication for child care providers published by the Association for Child Development. A current issue of the newsletter provides information on healthy breads and grains, tips for family day care providers, sample daily schedules, snack guidelines, allergies, and a month's worth of activities ($15.00).

Association for Child Development
P.O. Box 1491
East Lansing, MI 48826
Toll-free: 800-234-3287

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: Parent Information

Description: The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) Parent Information Page provides 25 online brochures designed to address questions parents commonly ask. The brochures are designed to assist communication between the dental team and the parent. In addition, the AAPD provides the following services to parents: (1) finding a dentist near you, and (2) links to related sites.

Address: http://aapd.org/Consum.html

Name: American Academy of Pediatrics: Information and Services for Parents

Description: Features of this site include: (1) Pediatric Referral Service; (2) Positioning (while sleeping) and SIDS: Update; (3) Publications, brochures, and resources on many topics; (4) Position statements on a variety of subjects (i.e., AIDS, discipline, vitamins, etc.); and (5) Immunization Schedules.

Address: http://www.aap.org/

Name: children with DIABETES

Description: children with DIABETES is an online resource for kids, families, and adults with Type I diabetes. This independent, all-volunteer effort aims to provide information about diabetes and diabetes management to kids and their parents. The site offers product reviews related to diabetes, forums for people with diabetes and their families to communicate with one another, and pages for children and parents to share their stories.

Address: http://www.castleweb.com/diabetes/

Name: Fatherhood Project

Description: The Fatherhood Project is a national research and education program that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men's involvement in childrearing. Current components include: (1) The Male Involvement Project (training initiative that helps get fathers and other significant men involved in Head Start and early childhood programs); (2) National Practitioners Network (network of community-based practitioners designed to facilitate and promote local activities that support fathers); and (3) Father-Friendly Business (an examination of how workplace policies can support men's involvement in family life). The site offers descriptions of available publications and listings of other fatherhood resources.

Address: http://www.fatherhoodproject.org/

Name: Global Child Net

Description: This organization is dedicated to utilizing new technology to optimize information dissemination and communication. The organization seeks to positively affect the way the global society views children and focuses on issues related to children's health around the world. GCNet publishes an online newspaper with in-depth coverage of issues related to children's health around the world. GCNet also maintains a database on issues related to the well-being of the world's children. GCNet provides world-wide networking for health professionals, child health workers, scientists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), health planners, and child advocates.

The site includes information on the "Year 2000 Child Health World Congress and Exposition," which will be held May 30-June 3, 2000, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Address: Web: http://www.gcnet.org/gcnet ; Gopher: gopher://edie.prost.sfu.ca:2000/1

Name: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care

Sponsor: U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Description: The primary mission of the National Resource Center is to promote health and safety in out-of-home child care settings throughout the nation. Available resources include: (1) National Health & Safety Standards Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, (2) Licensing regulations for all 50 states and DC, (3) links to child-care-related sites, and (4) information on various topics of interest.

Address: http://nrc.uchsc.edu/

Name: The Pediatric Database (PEDBASE)

Description: PEDBASE contains descriptions of over 500 childhood illnesses to provide information on various pediatric disorders. Information on each disorder has been obtained from at least three sources. The database can be downloaded.

Address: http://www.icondata.com/health/pedbase/

Name: Principles of Parenting

Sponsor: Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University

Description: The Principles of Parenting publications are part of the total parenting program that emphasizes understanding, guiding, and encouraging children. The publications focus on three areas: (1) Strengthening the Parent, (2) Developing the Caring Child, and (3) Developing the Strong Child. Each area contains numerous four- to eight-page articles.

Address: http://www.humsci.auburn.edu/parent/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for June 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

Announcements

Stand for Children Day is June 1, 1997. Be sure to visit http://www.tmn.com/cdf/stand.html [EDITORIAL NOTE: site no longer available after June 7, 1997 deadline] between now and June 7 for the latest Stand Day events listing and contact information, and for terrific children's artwork, stories about successful "Beat the Odds" teens, reports on Stand for Children Day, and more!

Also, between May 25 and June 7, you can join in the Virtual Stand for Children at http://www.tmn.com/cdf/stand97_6.html [EDITORIAL NOTE: site no longer available after June 7, 1997 deadline]. With your help, this online campaign for children will make a major difference in our children's health and lives.

The U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau invites you to a National Working Women's Summit live via satellite conference on Thursday, June 5, 1997, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). The theme is "Economic Equity: Realities, Responsibilities, and Rewards." The interactive broadcast will focus on work and family issues of importance to women such as welfare-to-work, pensions, health and safety, child care, fair pay, lifelong learning, and workplace violence.

The summit will begin with a call to action by Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman, followed by two panel discussions. At the end of the broadcast, summit participants with additional questions are encouraged to call the 24-hour toll-free number 800-827-5335 or to email the Women's Bureau at wb-wwc@dol.gov.

To participate as a satellite host or for more information about this summit, call the Women's Bureau at 800-827-5335 or email aaguirre@dol.gov. You can also visit their Web site at http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/welcome.html.

The June Satellite Town Meeting will focus on early childhood development, its link to later reading skills, and the importance of parental and community involvement in young children's education. Among the featured topics will be the importance of proper health and nutrition, parenting skills, and high-quality early child care programs. Entitled "Ready to Learn: Preparing Young Children for School Success," the hour-long program will air on Tuesday, June 17, 1997, at 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).

To participate in the Satellite Town Meeting, ask your local Public Broadcasting System (PBS) member station or Chamber of Commerce if your group can use the facility as a downlink site. Call 800-USA-LEARN for more information or to register your participation.

The satellite coordinates are:

C-Band: Galaxy 4; Orbital Location 99 degrees West; Transponder 9; Horizontal Polarity; Channel 9; Downlink Frequency 3880 MHZ; Audio Subcarriers 6.2 MHZ (Spanish) and 6.8 MHZ (English).

Ku-Band: Satellite SBS-6; Orbital Location 74 degrees West; Transponder 15; Horizontal Polarity; Channel 15; Downlink Frequency 12068 MHZ; Audio Subcarriers 6.2 MHZ (Spanish) and 6.8 MHZ (English).

Family Reunion 6: Families and Learning

Family Reunion 6: Families and Learning is the title of this year's national family policy conference, which has been moderated for the past six years by Vice-President Al Gore. The purpose of these conferences is to (1) create a national discussion on an issue of public concern, (2) build partnerships around an issue, (3) examine current knowledge about an issue, (4) learn about effective programs and policies already in place, and (5) create a vehicle to obtain feedback that can inform federal, state, and local policy development about issues.

This year's conference will explore issues related to families' involvement in their children's education. According to Vice-President Gore, "It is critical for families to be actively involved in every phase of their children's education. A parent is a baby's most important teacher. Too often, however, the hectic demands of day-to-day life get in the way of spending quality time with our children. This conference will give us an opportunity to hear from parents and experts in family policy about how to successfully overcome those barriers and integrate learning into everyday family life."

This conference, scheduled for June 25, 1997, from 8:30 a.m. to approximately 5 p.m. (Central Daylight Time), will be available via satellite downlink. All materials needed for a local downlink will be available on the conference Web site after June 20, 1997. These materials include a letter that can be sent inviting people to a local downlink, a press release publicizing the local downlink, satellite coordinates and technical information, and a brief facilitators' guide with some sample discussion questions.

If you have any additional questions, please contact:

Madge Alberts
Program Leader
Children, Youth and Families Initiative
Minnesota Extension Service
University of Minnesota
12 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108
Telephone: 612-624-9730
Fax: 612-626-1210
Email: malberts@mes.umn.edu

For the 17th year, the Summer Institute of the Wheelock College Center for Parenting Studies is bringing together professionals from many disciplines who want to learn more about contemporary issues in parenting and how to be more effective in supporting and working with families.

The Summer Institute has been planned in intensive 3- and 4-day seminars and courses to meet the needs of practicing professionals. There will be 11 courses/seminars offered, with the first beginning on June 30, 1997. Some of the topics covered in these courses include parent counseling, supporting dysfunctional families, organizing parent groups, working with difficult children and parents, home visiting, working with parents and families of diverse cultures, family violence, and review of child development for professionals who work with parents.

For more information, please contact:

The Center for Parenting Studies
Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
Boston, MA 02215-4176
Telephone: 617-734-5200, ext. 214

There is a new toll-free hotline (800-311-BABY) available for women seeking information on prenatal care. Callers will be routed to their state maternal and child health hotline or one of the Healthy Start prenatal care hotlines in 22 communities. Healthy Start is a Department of Health and Human Services initiative designed to reduce infant mortality in certain communities. Spanish-speaking callers can phone 800-504-7081.

On February 28, 1997, The Discovery Network began rebroadcasting the Department of Education's Satellite Town Meetings on The Learning Channel. The Town Meetings air monthly on Fridays from 11 am to 12 noon (ET) as part of an ongoing series to explore how schools across the country are coping with challenges and finding solutions.

The schedule of the two remaining rebroadcasts of the Satellite Town Meetings on the Learning Channel is below:

Friday, June 27, 1997

"Becoming a Reading, Literate Society"

Friday, July 4, 1997

"Ready to Learn: Preparing Young Children for School Success"

Conferences

CONFERENCE: Fourth Annual Conference on Character Building

Date: June 12-14, 1997

Contact:

Michael Bocian
The Communication Network
2130 H St., NW
Suite 714J
Washington, DC 20052

CONFERENCE: Conflict Resolution in Schools

Date: June 16-18, 1997

Place: Chicago, Illinois

Description: The fifth annual summer conference for K-12 educators is entitled "Conflict Resolution in Schools." The conference will feature 16 workshop options on such topics as creating peaceable schools, discipline in schools, peer mediation, life negotiations, and dealing with anger. The conference is sponsored by the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution and the National Center for Conflict Resolution Education.

Contact:

Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution
National Center for Conflict Resolution Education
110 West Main St.
Urbana, IL 61801
Telephone: 217-384-4118
Fax: 217-384-8280

CONFERENCE: 101st Annual National PTA Convention & Exhibition

Date: June 18-21, 1997

Place: Kansas City Convention Center; Kansas City, Missouri

Description: The title of this year's convention is "The Promise to Children." It is the 101st annual convention.

Contact:

National PTA
700 N. Wabash Ave.
Suite 2100

Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 312-670-6782

CONFERENCE: All Children Born to Learn

Date: June 21-24, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency, St. Louis, Missouri

Description: All Children Born to Learn is the sixth annual international conference of the Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

Contact:

Patti Holman or Terri Harris
Telephone: 314-432-4330

CONFERENCE: Transforming Ideas into Action: The Sixth Annual National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

Date: June 25-28, 1997

Place: Seattle, Washington

Description: NAEYC'S National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development is designed for leaders, by leaders, and to create new leaders. The conference provides participants with an opportunity to engage in, organize, and meet their individual learning needs or professional training requirements. Participants will be able to discuss a variety of topics of interest with leading early childhood authorities and noted experts in related fields.

Special Symposium Information:
Higher Education's Role in Developing and Linking Community-Based and College Training in School-Age Care
An all-day symposium on school-age care is slated during the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development Conference. The symposium is a "call to action" for professionals in the school-age care field. Several panelists and speakers are scheduled to appear.

Contact:

The National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development
1509 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426
Telephone: (800) 424-2460 or (202) 232-8777

CONFERENCE: National F.R.E.E. Conference on Fatherhood, Co-Parenting, and Disunited Families

Date: July 18-20, 1997

Place: San Francisco, California

Description: The FREE Foundation, in conjunction with the Fathers' Rights and Equality Exchange, is pleased to announce the second annual FREE National Conference. The conference will feature several keynote speakers and presentations on alternative dispute resolution in family law, parental kidnapping, parental alienation, and battered men.

Contact:

Anjelica
Telephone: 800-424-9498

CONFERENCE: Fifth Joint National Conference on "Gangs, Schools and Community"

Date: September 25-27, 1997

Place: Holiday Inn International Drive Resort; Orlando, Florida

Description: The plenary and breakout sessions, the sharing fair, and networking opportunities of the conference will concurrently address school and community intervention programs, reducing the attractiveness of gangs, legal and security issues concerning school and governmental policies, research on gangs, and basic prevention programming.

Contact: Telephone: 800-537-4903

CONFERENCE: Growing Up with Places to Go

Date: September 26-27, 1997

Place: Charlotte, North Carolina

Description: The fourth annual conference is being sponsored by the North Carolina School-Age Care Coalition. It is designed specifically for school-age care professionals who work with 9- to 15-year-olds.

Contact:

Telephone: 704-549-4803

CONFERENCE: International Conference on Parents with Disabilities and Their Families

Date: October 23-26, 1997

Place: San Francisco Bay Area

Description: This conference presents the latest in research and practical advice about parenting with a disability. This conference is a broad-based forum for practitioners, researchers, and parents to present their work and exchange information. International experts will lead conference workshops on the following topics: custody, assistive technology, reproductive rights, legal issues, adaptive equipment, intervention models, violence and abuse, child care, and parenting with a cognitive disability. This conference is hosted by Through the Looking Glass, an international leader on disability and family issues.

Contact:

International Conference
Through the Looking Glass
2198 Sixth St. #100
Berkeley, CA 94710
Telephone: 800-644-2666, ext. 123
Outside the U.S.: 510-848-1112, ext. 123
Fax: 510-848-4445

CONFERENCE: Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. National Conference: Nothing Could Be Finer

Date: October 29-November 1, 1997

Place: Radisson Plaza Hotel and Charlotte Marriot City Center; Charlotte, North Carolina

Description: The Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. National Conference is designed for persons interested in literacy, volunteerism, and adult education.

Contact:

Peggy May, Conference Manager
Deborah Joyce, Conference Planner
c/o LVA
635 James St.
Syracuse, NY 13203
Telephone: 315-472-0001
Fax: 315-472-0002
Email: lvanat@aol.com

CONFERENCE: Families, Technology, and Education Conference

Date: October 30-November 1, 1997

Place: Itasca, Illinois

Description: Just as the automobile changed family life and expectations, creating not only new opportunities but also unexpected challenges, so are new electronic technologies changing the ways we raise and educate our children. This conference will provide opportunities to reflect on the nature of current and emerging technologies and on the ways they affect family life and the education of children. The impact of the Internet, new telephone technologies, television, and other media will be the focus of discussions. Presenters at the conference will include technology experts, policymakers, program planners, educators, parents, and parenting professionals. The conference is intended to address the needs of many types of professionals who work with families, including family support personnel, educators, corporate executives, media specialists, librarians, health care specialists, publishers, and information systems developers. The conference will provide attendees with an increased awareness of the technologies available to children, families, and communities, an increased awareness of how to use technologies to serve their communities, and opportunities to interact with leaders, colleagues, and parents in order to better understand the impact of technology on family culture and children's education.

Contact:

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 800-583-4135
Email: arobrtsn@uiuc.edu
URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/fte/ftehome.html

Return to the Parent News for June 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN

National Parent Information Network

Parent News for July 1997

Volume 3, Number 7

- What's New on NPIN
- July's Feature:
  Building Partnerships between Parent and Physician: A Pediatrician's Point of View
  by Howard S. King, MD, MPH
- Community Spotlight:
  Homevisiting: Bridging the Gap between a Family and the Community
  by Anne S. Robertson
- Of Interest:
  - *Recent Survey Reveals Parents of Young Children Want More Support and Information*
  - *National PTA Releases Standards for Parent Involvement*
  - *The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*
  - *New Guide Can Help You Choose Good TV Programs for Your Children*
  - *Helping Children Learn at Home: Math and Science Tips for Young Children*
  - *Food Preferences in Infants*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

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Parent News Editorial Information

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Parent News for July 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during June 1997

NPIN now features a *brand new* PARENTING Calendar, graphically formatted (like printed calendars) in order to make it easier to find and view each month's announcements and conferences. With the new graphical calendars, you may now download and/or print each month's calendar (and even hang it on your refrigerator!). The new PARENTING Calendar also features a detailed listing of announcements and conferences by month, as well as an alphabetical listing of conferences by title and sponsor.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *After the Stand: Be a Children's Champion*
  Discusses five steps you can take to become an active and effective "Children's Champion," along with several strategies and activities for each step.
- *The benefits of an inclusive education: Making it work*
  Discusses the history of inclusion as well as the current debate on its appropriateness and effectiveness. Lists benefits of and reasons for the inclusion of children with special needs.
- *Neighbors working together to benefit children*
  Explores several initiatives associated with the Colorado Children's Campaign, including *Bright Beginnings,* which is a public/private partnership created to improve the lives of children in the most critical period of development -- from birth through age three.

In the Children with Special Needs section, the following resource has been added:

- *The benefits of an inclusive education: Making it work*
  Discusses the history of inclusion as well as the current debate on its appropriateness and effectiveness. Lists benefits of and reasons for the inclusion of children with special needs.

In the Early Childhood -- Family/Peer Relationships section, the following resource has been added:

- *Biters: Why they do it and what to do about it*
  Explains the nature and causes of biting in children, as well as the four "types" of biters. Knowing which type of biter a specific child is will help parents and educators to determine the appropriate response and/or discipline.

In the Child Care section, the following resource has been added:

- *Biters: Why they do it and what to do about it*
  Explains the nature and causes of biting in children, as well as the four "types" of biters. Knowing which type of biter a specific child is will help parents and educators to determine the appropriate response and/or discipline.

In the Early Childhood -- Learning section, the following resources have been added:

- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Families*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It includes general strategies to help family members be effective teachers, as well as specific strategies for babies, crawlers, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- *Technology in early childhood programs*
  Provides six tips for professionals in evaluating computer programs, which can be used -- like any other learning tool -- in developmentally appropriate or inappropriate ways.
- *Technology and young children: What parents should know*
  Suggests tips and strategies for making technology an effective learning tool for children, including how to pick out good software.

In the Parents and Schools as Partners section, excerpts from the following resource have been added, with more excerpts to be added in upcoming months:

- *Organizing a Successful Family Center in Your School*
  This booklet was developed to help school staff members, parents, and community leaders understand how family centers can promote family participation and strengthen their schools. It also serves as a guide to establishing family centers.

In the Teens (14-20) section, the following resource has been added:

- *Family Support Programs and Teen Parents*
  Provides suggestions for how to create effective family support programs for teens, especially in regard to the unique challenges facing teens today. Five Teen Parenting Program Models are described, focusing on pregnancy-prevention strategies.

In the Helping Children Learn at Home section, the following resources have been added:

- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Families*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It includes general strategies to help family members be effective teachers, as well as specific strategies for babies, crawlers, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Fathers and Adolescents: Developmental and Clinical Perspectives* by Shmuel Shulman
- *Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child* by Holly van Gulden and Lisa M. Bartels-Rabb
- *Caring for Other People's Children: A Complete Guide to Family Day Care* by Frances Kemper Alston
- *Best for My Baby: Low-Income Parents and the Struggle to Do the Right Thing* by Jim Greenman
- *Your Ten- to Fourteen-Year-Old* by by Louise Bates Ames, et al.

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Consortium for School Networking
- Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy
- Cuban American National Council

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Adoptive Families*
- *Our Children: The National PTA Magazine*
- *Twin Services Reporter: Multiple Birth News*
- *The National Report on Work & Family*
- *Potpourri*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for July 1997

July's Feature

Building Partnerships between Parent and Physician: A Pediatrician's Point of View

by Howard S. King, MD, MPH

We receive a large volume of questions, through our Parents AskERIC service, from parents who have a health-related concern for their child. Some of these concerns might have been addressed if there had been more effective communication between the parent and physician.

Dr. Howard King has been a pediatrician in private practice for over 25 years and has held a National Institute of Mental Health fellowship in child psychiatry. He also serves as an instructor in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, is on staff at Children's Hospital and Newton-Wellesley Hospital, and has worked with a number of health plans, including Pilgrim and Aetna. A consultant to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, he is a member of the Bright Futures Panel to redirect the focus of pediatric care to include a broader concern for psychosocial issues and prevention of family problems. Dr. King has provided some ideas that may assist parents with communicating with their child's physician and that may provide insight into the problem of effective communication.

Not long ago, a friend asked me what was the most common question parents ask about the emotional development of children. Initially, I was uncertain about the answer. Was it, "Is my child's behavior normal?" or "What can I do to make sure I am doing the right thing?" But, on reflection, I decided it was often something else. When parents are concerned about their child, they frequently ask, "Could you recommend something I can read?"

The good news is that by asking such a question, parents demonstrate that they are being reflective about a particular problem and that they want to do something about it. It may also show that they trust the pediatrician by asking for help, if only to recommend something to read.

But the bad news with recommending something to read is that many problems are better handled by talking them out, face-to-face. When parents ask, "Could you recommend something for me to read?" perhaps they are really saying that they don't expect the doctor to take the time to discuss their issues, face-to-face.

The family pediatrician has a unique advantage with helping parents address the emotional problems of children. He has known the family over time, has been available to address serious health issues, has observed the child's growth and development, and is often present at periods of transition and stress. Nevertheless, it is true that pediatricians and parents have often not capitalized on this advantage. Too often, parents are either prematurely reassured or referred too quickly. If parents and pediatricians could discuss the possibility of thoughtful, empathic listening, not looking at the clock, both might discover that many problems could at least be better understood, and possibly even solved, just by taking the time to talk. It does require, however, that the pediatrician really listens, striving to understand how the whole family is coping.

The following suggestions are offered with the hope that they might help parents create such a relationship with their physician. If they could, it might be a step toward solving their child's problem. For example, parents might:

- *Ask if the physician is willing to help with an emotional problem.* At their earliest meeting, parents should consider asking if the doctor is willing to help with behavior concerns. If she is not, then parents should ask for a recommendation for another professional who can assist them with their child's problem.
- *Question the physician if he tells you that your child "will grow out of it."* Parents need to feel certain that they have been given adequate opportunity to describe the problem or to have their child assessed.
- *Review the issue of confidentiality with the physician.* Parents may wish to ask the physician how their child's medical record and the private information that the parent may be sharing will be protected. Physicians need to listen and reassure parents that details are protected from being shared with anyone who might misuse the information.

Understanding what is involved in an adequate assessment of your child's problem is also important. An adequate assessment may take an hour or longer and may include a history of the family as well as the child. It is helpful for parents to describe if their child's problem coincided with some event or if it is chronic, when it occurs, the duration, if there is a family history of this type of concern, and what the parents have done to help the child. Perhaps the parents view the problem differently. What are their worst fears if it continues? While these types of question may make a parent feel uncomfortable, they are important for a full assessment of the child's situation. Finally, a good assessment should include a discussion of the child's and the family's strengths.

If the physician views the parent as a teacher, the doctor-patient relationship could evolve into a very special partnership. Furthermore, if doctor and parent could accomplish such a meeting of minds and feelings, then it is reasonable to hope that the parent, in turn, might move on to helping his or her child become similarly competent. However, how can parents judge the quality of their child's evaluation? Parents should feel that:

- the physician is profoundly interested in them as people,
- they have shared their thoughts and feelings,
- they feel a renewed sense of competence in addressing the problems of their child,
- they see that they have choices in confronting these problems and that they have the capacity for making good decisions.

While it is painful for parents to confront developmental issues in their children, such problems could also be viewed as an opportunity to assess how they and their child are doing. The earlier this assessment is accomplished, the better. If parents can find an empathic listener, they may discover the problem has been bubbling under the surface for some time. By working with the pediatrician to consider how their family is doing, parents may find constructive interventions that could help their family become stronger.

For more information on patient-physician partnerships or health-related concerns, please consult the following:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Department of Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health
141 Northwest Point Blvd.
P.O. Box 927
Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0927
Telephone: 800-433-9016

Touchpoints Project
1295 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02115

Telephone: 617-859-7215

Shelov, Steven. (1994). *Caring for your baby and young child: Birth to age 5.* Bantam Books, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Schor, Edward L. (1995). *Caring for your school-age child: Ages 5 to 12.* Bantam Books, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Greydanus, Donald E. (1991). *Caring for your adolescent: Ages 12 to 21.* Bantam Books, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Community Spotlight

Homevisiting: Bridging the Gap between a Family and the Community

by Anne S. Robertson

Tracy grabbed her two bags full of supplies and walked up the front steps of the duplex. The door flew open, and three grinning boys peered out at her. "Hey guys, good to see you!" She greeted them warmly. The boys pulled her into the house with a yell. " Mom, Tracy's here!" After giving the boy's mother a hug, Tracy sat at the kitchen table, and the boys watched as she pulled this week's activity out of her bags. Tracy is a Head Start homevisitor who meets with families on a weekly basis providing a valuable educational resource for needy children and parents in her community.

As a method for delivering services to needy or disenfranchised families, new attention is being given to homevisiting programs such as the program sponsored by Head Start. Effective homevisiting models have reported success with health issues, such as early intervention programs, and psychosocial issues, including child abuse and neglect. Tracy's parenting experience and early childhood training give her the knowledge to help this mother with the daily trials of parenting active preschoolers. In addition, Tracy is able to provide information on nutrition, health care, and learning activities that encourage school readiness. Through her consistent visiting, dedication, and willingness to accept the family "on their own turf," Tracy has built the trust and confidence of the family. In the same way that one might ask for advice from a trusted relative or friend, this parent feels comfortable sharing problems with Tracy and asking for help before a problem becomes overwhelming. However, effective homevisiting is much more than just a weekly meeting with a new friend.

The winter 1993 issue of *The Future of Children,* published by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, analyzes the practice of homevisiting and discusses principles and quality indicators that might guide future programs, including:

- *Addressing a broad spectrum of family needs.* Programs that are flexible and able to assist the family with multiple issues will have greater impact than those with a single focus.
- *Providing greater intensity and duration of services.* Families who received weekly visits and were linked to other services within the community were more successful than families who were visited monthly.
- *Using professional staff as homevisitors.* Programs where staff members were dedicated and well-trained, including people with bachelor's, master's, or nursing degrees, were more successful than programs using laypeople with little training as homevisitors.
- *Setting realistic, individual goals for the family.* Homevisitors who are sensitive to the unique characteristics of the clients are able to assist the family with developing achievable goals, and they see greater progress.

Another critical component to a successful homevisiting program is supporting the concept that families have strengths, are resourceful, and can change when they are encouraged to do so. The interpersonal relationship that grows between the homevisitor and the family or parent is a core factor that influences the family to build upon their strengths. The homevisitor seeks to develop this relationship by modeling consistent, dependable behavior and respecting confidentiality while setting limits on inappropriate actions. The homevisitor also helps the family achieve their goals while promoting the parent's self-esteem.

In European countries such as Denmark and Great Britain, homevisiting is often universal, and every family of a newborn will receive several homevisits. However, in the United States, a homevisitor is frequently paired with a family who is feeling the impact of multiple issues such as poverty, abuse or neglect, racism, handicap, or limited literacy. Homevisiting programs cannot, nor should they be expected to, solve difficult social problems that affect all of society. Rather, the primary goal of the homevisitor is to focus on the parent or caregiver and assist him or her in becoming more effective in parenting. The homevisitor works with parents to find ways to solve problems that affect their family.

The pattern of homevisiting will vary depending on program goals and will be tailored to family needs. The point of entry to the program may begin with a family referral by a health care or service provider, educator, neighbor, or friend. The family may or may not know about the referral, but the homevisitor will meet with the family, explain the program, and obtain the parent's consent to participate, as well as provide clarification of the program's goals. Voluntary involvement is important since homevisiting programs are more likely to be successful when participation is not mandatory.

Once the parent has expressed the desire to participate, regular homevisits of 45 to 90 minutes will be scheduled. Some families may receive homevisits for as long as 3 years. The first few visits center on goal setting for the family, intake or assessment information, and building trust between the visitor and parent. Later visits intermix discussion of prepared educational activities with discussion of community resources that can assist the family with obtaining their goals. Quarterly evaluations are helpful for both the visitor and the family as they assess their progress and make changes as needed. During later stages, homevisiting is gradually reduced as the family prepares to leave the program. A homevisitor is successful when the family no longer needs the regular support provided through the program and the parent has become more effective in his or her role.

Studies have suggested a number of long-term cost benefits of homevisiting programs, including reduced need for expensive health care such as hospitalization and emergency room visits. Other benefits include reductions in government services, such as AFDC and food-stamp payments, and an increase in the capacity for the parent to become economically independent (*Future of Children*, 1993, pp. 84-85). The evidence is compelling for states such as Massachusetts, where a broad collaborative of child and family advocates recently proposed The Newborn Home Visiting Bill. This bill will establish universal homevisiting to all first-time parents under the age of 21 and will allow for visits to continue, for certain families, until the child is 3 years old. There is a broad-based, bipartisan support for the bill, since it is estimated that for every $3 spent on prevention, such as homevisiting, the state saves approximately $6 on child welfare services, medical care, or other special services, as well as strengthening a parent's parenting skills, knowledge, and self-confidence.

For more information:

HIPPY USA
53 West 23rd St., 5th Floor
New York, NY 10010

Telephone: 212-645-4048

Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.
9274 Olive Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63132
Telephone: 314-432-4330

National Center on Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 West Main St.
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Telephone: 502-584-1133

Even Start Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Children's Trust Fund
Attn: Suzin Bartley and Shereen Tyrrell
294 Washington St., Suite 640
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone: 617-727-8957

Sources:

The Future of Children: Homevisiting, 3(3). (1993). Los Altos, CA: The Center for the Future of Children, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The children's community bridge project: A manual for homevisiting. (1994). Concord NH: State of New Hampshire, Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

Recent Survey Reveals Parents of Young Children Want More Support and Information

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A recent survey conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, a New York City based national foundation that supports independent research on health and social issues, reveals that opportunities for helping parents get their infants and toddlers off to a good start are being missed by the health care system. This nationwide representative survey of more than 2,000 mothers and fathers with children under 3 (released in August 1996) finds that American parents are struggling with the demands of rearing young children under considerable financial and time pressures. The survey shows that parents want more information, services, and help from doctors on how they can help their children thrive and learn during the critically important first years.

Findings presented in the executive summary are listed below.

- · **Early hospital discharge leaves parents on their own to cope with newborn demands**. The increasingly common practice of discharging mothers and infants in the first day or two after birth provides little opportunity for new parents to become comfortable and knowledgeable about newborn care. Follow-up home visits by nurses occur only in one of five cases.
- · **Health professionals are missing opportunities to encourage breast-feeding**. One-third of mothers do not breast-feed their infants, and only slightly more than half of mothers (53%) breast-feed for more than one month. Mothers are much more likely to breast-feed when encouraged to do so by their doctors or nurses (74% vs. 45%).
- · **Parents are missing opportunities to stimulate infant brain development**. Only two in five parents read daily to their infants and toddlers, despite research showing the importance of stimulating activities, such as reading, looking at pictures, and playing music, even in the very early months. Parents are more likely to read to infants and toddlers if doctors discuss with them what they can do to help their children learn (47% vs. 37%).
- · **Parents are receptive to information from physicians**. Parents indicate that they would find helpful more information on newborn care, sleep patterns, how to respond to a crying baby, toilet training, discipline, and encouraging their child to learn. Yet fewer than half of parents discuss these issues with their physician.
- · **Parents receiving special pediatric services rate physicians more highly**. Some parents receive special pediatric services: packets of information on newborn care (89%), nurse home visit (20%), telephone advice line (32%), reminder service for immunizations and well-baby visits (42%), and child health record (66%). The majority of parents receiving these services find them very useful and are much more likely to give their doctor an excellent rating on overall quality of care provided (71% for those receiving three or more services vs. 49% for those receiving none of the services).
- · **Parents' child-rearing practices reflect strains on families**. Parents are more likely to use harsher disciplinary measures with toddlers than with younger children. One-quarter of parents report spanking their 2- to 3-year-old toddlers sometimes or often, and 63% report yelling at them.

Only half of all children have regular routines for meals, naps, and bedtimes; lack of regular routine is more common among single parents and lower-income parents.

- · **Parents' mental and emotional health influences child-rearing practices**. Nearly one out of ten mothers (9%) reports experiencing three to five depressive symptoms (including feeling depressed, sad, or that people disliked them, crying, or not enjoying life some of the time). Parents who exhibit at least three of the five depressive symptoms are twice as likely as parents with no depressive symptoms to become frequently frustrated with their child's behavior (44% vs. 21%), are more likely to yell (51% vs. 34%) or spank (17% vs. 11%) their children, and are less likely to read to their children (27% vs. 43%) or maintain regular routines (31% vs. 58%).
- · **Not all parents are ready or prepared**. Preparation for parenthood is mixed. One-third of births are not planned. About two-thirds of parents do not attend a class or discussion groups about parenting. Higher-income and better-educated parents are more likely to attend parenting classes.
- · **Financial stress on families is also an issue**. Half of children are in families with incomes less than $40,000 a year, and one-quarter are in families with incomes less than $20,000. One-third of families with incomes less than $40,000 report some difficulty in paying for basic child supplies, such as formula, food, diapers, clothes, and shoes. Twenty-three percent of families with incomes less than $40,000 report some difficulty in paying for the child's medical expenses.
- · **Government programs lend a vital helping hand**. Almost half of children (47%) have families who have received some form of government aid, such as cash assistance, food stamps, or Medicaid, since their birth. One-fourth (28%) of all children and 16 percent of parents are covered by Medicaid. For families with incomes less than $10,000, Medicaid covers 79% of children and 58% of parents.

According to the Commonwealth Fund, the portrait of today's parents revealed in this survey is one of parents awed by responsibility, wishing passionately that their children will grow up to be happy, healthy, productive citizens, but struggling under the enormous responsibility and often missing opportunities to assure good outcomes for their children. This group argues that much more could be done to support parents in fulfilling their most important responsibility.

Source:

Young, K. T., Davis, K., & Schoen, C. (1996). *The Commonwealth Fund survey of parents with young children: Executive summary*. New York: The Commonwealth Fund.

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To obtain information on receiving a copy of this survey, contact:

The Commonwealth Fund
1 East 75th St.
New York, NY 10021-2692
Telephone: 212-535-0400
Email: mlr@cmwf.org

Internet: http://www.cmwf.org

Continue to the next article.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

National PTA Releases Standards for Parent Involvement

In January 1997, the National PTA released six standards for promoting parent and family involvement in schools. The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs were developed by the National PTA in cooperation with education and parent involvement professionals through the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

These research-based standards were created in conjunction with other national standards and reform initiatives that support children's learning and success. The purpose of the standards is to:

- promote meaningful parent and family participation,
- raise awareness regarding the components of effective programs, and
- provide guidelines for schools that wish to improve their programs.

These standards are intended for principals, administrators, teachers, and parents who are in a position to influence and improve parent involvement programs. The National PTA plans to review the standards on a regular basis and revise them as needed to respond to future demographic trends and research.

Research Findings

While the knowledge surrounding the importance of parent involvement is broad-based, the challenge still remains in transforming the knowledge into practice and skills.

Some of the key research findings include:

- parent involvement leads to higher student achievement, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or parent's education level;
- as parent involvement increases, student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior decrease;
- school programs that involve parents outperform identical programs without parent and family involvement;
- parents are more likely to be involved when educators encourage and assist parents in helping their children with homework; and
- collaboration with families is an essential component of a reform strategy, *but* it is not a substitute for high-quality education programs or comprehensive school improvement.

The six national standards are summarized below along with some of the quality indicators that have been found in successful programs and sample applications.

Standard One: Communicating

Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

Quality Indicators

- Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, and student services.
- Distribute student work for parental comment and review on a regular basis.
- Communicate with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement, not just regarding misbehavior or failure.
- Promote informal activities at which parents, staff, and community members can interact.

Sample Applications

- Take advantage of communication tools. Explore support options for improving mail, telephone, fax, or email access and use for educators and parents. For example, teachers can use a parent's voice mail to leave daily assignments and attendance reports.
- Create class newsletters for parents that contain tips for supporting learning at home.
- Establish a routine for parents to review their children's work on a regular basis. For example, send home a weekly folder of student work with a place for parent comments.
- Develop a parent handbook to provide positive, practical information about the school, including information on how parents can support their children's efforts.

Standard Two: Parenting

Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Quality Indicators

- Link parents to programs and resources within the community that provide support services to families.
- Establish policies that support and respect family responsibilities.
- Provide an accessible parent/family information and resource center to support parents and families with training, resources, and other services.
- Ask parents what support they need and work to find ways to meet those needs.

Sample Applications

- Determine what ethnic groups are represented in each school and provide translation materials and other support services as needed.
- Arrange for local parent educators to provide workshops to help parents deal with parenting issues. Be sure to provide child care and transportation to encourage parents and family members to participate.
- Develop family kits based on certain themes with games, videos, or other tools for parents to interact with their children on a specific topic. For example, build a kit around the theme of setting goals.

Standard Three: Student Learning

Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Quality Indicators

- Seek parental participation in decision making that affects students.
- Inform parents of the expectations for students in each subject at each grade level.
- Assign interactive homework that will require students to discuss with their parents what they are learning in class.
- Provide information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assessments.

Sample Applications

- Provide informational sheets on how to help a young child with reading or how to help a teen with a research project.
- Have students interview parents or family members on specific topics. Provide advance instructions and specific guidelines for each project.

Standard Four: Volunteering

Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Quality Indicators

- Make sure that all materials posted at school entrances and interactions with parents create an atmosphere that is inviting to parents.
- Make sure that parents who are unable to volunteer in the school are given options for helping in other ways (at home or work).
- Show appreciation for parents' participation and value their diverse contributions.

Sample Applications

- Develop a survey to gather parent and family volunteer information, including special skills or talents.
- Provide a consistent place and process for parent volunteers to sign in and list the hours served.

Standard Five: School Decision Making and Advocacy

Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Quality Indicators

- Include parents (more than one to ensure adequate representation of the "parent voice") on all decision-making and advisory committees. Make sure parents have adequate training for such areas as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform initiatives, safety, and personnel issues.
- Encourage and facilitate active parent participation in the decisions that affect students, such as student placement and course selection.
- Provide understandable, accessible, and well-publicized processes for influencing decisions, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems.

Sample Applications

- Share annual reports of school performance and program information with parents to review current progress and solicit input for future goals. Develop workshops or include parents in ongoing training on relevant topics such as developing parents as advocates, mastering skills for supporting learning, identifying and supporting learning styles, resolving difficulties, and fostering student achievement.

Standard Six: Collaborating with Community

Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Quality Indicators

- Distribute information regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other resources that serve families within the community.
- Collaborate with community agencies to provide family support services and adult learning opportunities, enabling parents to more fully participate in activities that support education.

Sample Applications

- Work with community partners to hold health fairs, technology nights, or other learning opportunities to inform parents and families of community resources and services.
- Recruit school volunteers from senior citizens groups.
- Request employer cooperation and encouragement of parent attendance at conferences and other activities in the local chamber of commerce newsletter.

These standards have been released along with a set of sample activities and measures that schools can use to judge whether their efforts are being effective. They are being distributed to the 25,000 local PTA presidents, as well as all school principals and administrators in the country. These standards have been endorsed by more than 30 groups, including two major national teachers' unions, the elementary and secondary principals' associations, and several parent organizations.

These six standards are based on the six types of parental involvement identified by Joyce Epstein, an education researcher at Johns Hopkins University. She has been studying and fostering effective partnerships between schools, families, and communities for 14 years. She cautions schools against setting unrealistic expectations based on these standards, however. According to Ms. Epstein, "The misperception is that any of these will lead to higher test scores. But, this is not a substitute for other school improvement and reform efforts, like a better curriculum. You can't put it all on the parent's back."

Parent involvement has received increased attention since it was added to the list of national education goals in 1994. That means that states have to show what they are doing to address parent involvement when they submit plans under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

According to Joan Dykstra, president of the National PTA, "It is with this fundamental goal in mind that the National PTA invites all education and parent involvement representatives to support these National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs so that success can soar — in school and beyond."

To view these standards, visit the National PTA Website.

Sources:

Jacobson, L. (1997, January). PTA issues parent-involvement standards for schools. *Education Week*, p. 8.

National PTA. (1997). *National standards for parent/family involvement programs.* Chicago, IL: National PTA.

Prepared for Parent News by Dawn Ramsburg

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

The Parent's Guide: Use TV to Your Child's Advantage

This book, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D., and Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., and endorsed by Fred Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," includes suggestions parents can use to moderate the television-viewing experience in their homes. The book includes general information about television and parent/child activities that will be included in Parent News over the next few months.

Excerpts and Summaries of points in Chapter 12: You and TV: Who's in Charge. Also Appendix B and C (see previous issues of Parent News for Chapters 1-11).

Throughout this book, the emphasis has been on encouraging parents and children to discuss television programs with each other as well as stressing the need for children to become more discerning active television viewers. In this chapter, this emphasis is taken one step further by examining ways for parents and children to work together to exert their influence over network programming. By expressing opinions about programs and commercials, by sending letters to networks, and by being aware of laws and agencies that regulate the industry, viewers can use their power to bring more appropriate and better-quality programming to commercial television.

The major goals of this chapter are to help children understand their potential influence on TV programming and to learn to use TV reviews and schedules in order to watch the best programs.

In 1934 under the Federal Communications Act, Congress created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to set rules concerning who may broadcast on television and under what circumstances they may do so. Another agency that regulates television is the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC serves to prohibit unfair and deceptive advertising on television.

It is important for children to know that TV programs are responsive to complaints and praise from viewers. You should encourage your children to write producers, networks, the FCC, or managers of stations. Similarly, children should be encouraged to write to the FTC and to advertisers if they feel a particular commercial is unfair. Parents and children should also be aware of unsuitable scheduling practices. For example, many times an excellent children's program does not gain a large audience because stations broadcast those shows at times that conflict with a child's schedule.

Parents can also work together in a variety of ways to influence networks to broadcast more educational programming as well as programs geared to specific age groups. It is important for parents to keep informed about new children's programs and help publicize good programs by letting other parents know of their existence.

You might suggest to your school librarian ways in which television can be linked to books. Some suggestions include:

- A television bulletin board, where notices of future television programs having educational or positive social messages are posted. Along with notices, lists of related books can be posted.
- A "TV-tie-in table," which displays books that relate to current or recent TV programs.
- A display of books related to TV events, such as the Olympics or the Super Bowl.
- Feature science books, such as biographies of famous scientists, or books about outer space, science fiction, and astronomy.
- Feature books about different cultures around the world.
- Make a display about TV, where books describing the industry, the technical aspects of TV, and careers in television are displayed.
- Have a conversation hour, where parents and children are invited for afternoon or evening discussions. For example, compare books to TV adaptations.
- Distribute a TV newsletter as part of library news, where you let children know about library books that relate to TV. Children can submit TV reviews.

If you now review your child's TV viewing record (Chapter 4) and find that your child is not only watching too much TV, but is watching indiscriminately, there are some things you can do to remedy the situation. The most important way you can monitor television is to carefully choose the programs that they watch by referring to a television guide or newspaper schedule. Show your children how to use these schedules, and encourage them to read reviews or descriptions of programs.

Parents, teachers, and children can discuss whether they have ever watched programs that they didn't really like. Discuss self-regulation: Do your children watch TV even when they don't like a program? Encourage your children to set up guidelines for TV viewing and make a schedule for TV watching.

Perhaps the most important ingredient in your family's television diet will be the family discussion period about program content. Our research indicates repeatedly that the parent, the teacher, or a group leader can make a difference in helping children understand a program and learn from it.

Discussion Ideas

1. What techniques does TV use to influence your feelings about a TV character? A real person? Be sure your child is aware of laugh-tracks, the responses of other characters, camera effects, and special effects.
2. What can we do to influence TV? Ask your children if they have ever seen a TV program that they thought shouldn't be on TV. Help your children distinguish between programs and commercials that are bad and unfair and those that are uninteresting. Talk about schedules and guidelines for TV watching. What kinds of things could your children do instead of watching TV? Make a list of all the activities your children can do alone or with the family.

Activities

1. While watching a situation comedy, write down how many jokes that are followed by laughter did not seem funny enough to make viewers laugh aloud.
2. Write a letter to a favorite star to tell him or her what you like or don't like about his or her program.
3. If you have seen a commercial that you think is fair or unfair, write a letter of praise or complaint to the FTC, the advertiser, or the network.
4. If you think there are too many commercials on children's TV programs, write to your congressman or senator.
5. Write a review of a TV program.

6. Use a program-rating chart to encourage children to evaluate the quality of programs they watch. List programs viewed on one day, and rate each on a 1 to 5 scale with 5 as the highest rating.

Appendix B

Things to watch for in Children's Advertising

1. Is the size of the product made clear?
2. If batteries are needed for a'toy, is this stated?
3. If assembly is required, does the ad say so?
4. Is a child or adult shown doing something unsafe?
5. Are children shown using a product not intended for children?
6. Are children shown using a product in a way that the average child couldn't?
7. Does the ad suggest that children will be superior to friends if they own the product?
8. Does the ad employ any demeaning or derogatory social stereotypes?
9. Does the ad suggest that an adult who buys a product for a child is better than one who does not?
10. Do program hosts or characters appear in commercials within their own programs?
11. In print publications, are the title characters of the publications used in ads within their own publications?
12. If fantasy elements are used, are they clearly "just pretend?"
13. In ads featuring "free prizes," is the premium offer clearly secondary?
14. Is a child-directed advertising appeal being used for vitamins or medications?
15. In there anything misleading about the product benefits?

Prepared by:

Children's Advertising Review Unit
National Advertising Division
Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc.
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New York, NY 10025
Telephone: 212-745-1353

Appendix C

Parents' Guidelines: Television and Your Children

These guidelines were developed by the Illinois Office of Education and have been endorsed by the PTA.

1. Start early to develop your child's good viewing habits.
2. Encourage planned viewing of specific programs instead of random viewing. Be physically active with little ones between planned programs.
3. Look for children's programs featuring young people in your child's peer group.
4. Make sure TV viewing is not a substitute for participating in other activities such as trips to the zoo, museums, or the introduction of hobbies.
5. Open up discussions with your children on sensitive TV themes to offer them the opportunity to raise questions that may remain unanswered in the content of these programs.
6. Explain that TV advertising is being paid for by the makers of a product being shown and that famous people say nice things about products for money.

7. Balance reading and television activities. Children can follow up interesting TV programs by checking out the library books from which some programs are adapted and by pursuing additional stories by the authors of those specific books.
8. Help children develop a balanced viewing schedule of action, comedy, fine arts, fantasy, sports, etc.
9. If you don't have cable TV, arrange for an antenna or distribution system to bring in a signal from a public television station so children will have the chance to watch alternative programming.
10. Point out positive examples that show how various ethnic and cultural groups all contribute to making a better society.
11. Show positive examples of women performing competently professionally, at home, and in sports.
12. Write to local newspapers, local TV stations, networks, the FCC, or advertisers about programs that include excessive violence.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

New Guide Can Help You Choose Good TV Programs for Your Children

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A new brochure called "The Smart Parent's Guide to Kids' TV" has been developed by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the American Academy of Pediatrics to help your family establish healthy TV-viewing habits. This guide offers a variety of statistics regarding TV viewing, information on the new TV ratings system, and tips for building a balanced TV diet. The brochure was adapted from *The Smart Parent's Guide to Kid's TV*, a book written by Dr. Milton Chen, the director of the Center for Education and Lifelong Learning at PBS member station KQED in San Francisco, California.

Copies of the brochure and other materials about TV and the family can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Department C-TV
P.O. Box 927
Elk Grove, IL 60009-0927

The brochure is also provided on the American Academy of Pediatrics Web site at:
http://www.aap.org/family/smarttv.htm

The Smart Parent's Guide to Kid's TV is available for $8.95 at most bookstores or by calling 800-358-3000.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

Helping Children Learn at Home: Math and Science Tips for Young Children

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Did you know that the games you play with your toddlers and preschoolers can influence their interest in learning math and science as they grow older? Young children are capable of learning such concepts as big and small, high and low, fast and slow, and heavy and light. By helping your children learn these concepts, you are helping them begin to learn about math and science.

According to educational experts from the National Science Foundation ("Helping Children Learn at Home," 1997), "young children are natural mathematicians and scientists" because of their curiosity and their desire to explore and experiment.

When parents encourage their children to ask questions and help children explore and discover the natural world, they are helping build an interest in math and science. Many experts say that children who have such experiences when they are very young develop an enjoyment for and a confidence in math and science that pays off as they get older.

Here are some ideas for what you can do to develop your preschooler's interest in math and science.

- *Go for a walk with your child.* Take time to stop along the way and watch things that children notice, such as flowers, animals, and bugs. Talk with your child about what you see, and ask about what he sees.
- *Draw pictures together.* Draw a picture of what you have seen, whether it was on your walk together, on your front steps, in the backyard, or from your window. Ask your child to draw a plant, an animal, or a favorite place, and then ask her to tell you about the drawing.
- *Turn a drawing into a story.* Write down what your child says about the picture he just drew. Ask him to make up a story about the picture, and save it with other artwork and stories he has developed.
- *Listen to your child and ask questions about what she is seeing and doing.* Children need to have time every day to tell another person about what they have seen or what they think. When you ask your child to tell you about a walk or a trip to the zoo, you are encouraging her to think and choose words.
- *Choose toys that help your child learn.* Young children learn about the world primarily by playing. As a result, they need toys that encourage them to imagine and explore, which are not necessarily those that are advertised on television. Toys do not have to be expensive, but they should be simple, safe, and long-lasting. Some ideas for toys include:

    - *Balls.* They can be bounced, rolled, thrown in the air, the grass, or the sidewalk. Which bounces the highest? Lowest? Which ones sink in water? Which ones float?
    - *Blocks.* Building blocks can be a great math and science toy because they help children learn

about engineering and geometry. You can either buy a set of wooden, plastic, or cardboard blocks, or you can make your own out of egg cartons, cereal boxes, or wood scraps. For young children, make sure the blocks are big enough to handle easily and keep out of mouths. Have enough blocks in different shapes and sizes to build unusual structures. Have children paint the blocks in bright colors.

- *Puzzles.* Puzzles help children learn to solve problems as well as learning about shapes, sizes, and colors. For toddlers, make sure the puzzle has some large pieces. You can make your own puzzle by pasting a magazine picture onto a piece of cardboard, then cutting it into large pieces. Or make a puzzle from one of your child's drawings. As children get older, they can do more difficult puzzles.
- *Plant a garden with your child.* Planting a garden, any size, is a great family activity. A garden can be a patch of dirt in the yard or a container on a window sill, and it has a season of math and science lessons in it. Measure the space or container, determine where the plants will get sunlight, find out how much seeds will cost, count the seeds, measure the rows, watch the plants grow and chart their growth, pick vegetables, look for insects, and learn what plants need to be healthy.
- *Read to your child.* Read books aloud every day. Look at picture books and talk about what you see. Alphabet and counting books are always popular, and you'll experience a sense of pride as you watch your children learn. Plan a regular time to go to the school library, pubic library or bookmobile. Enlist brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents to help read stories. Have your child read to you if he wants to or tell you a story based on the pictures in the book. Remember that it does not matter if you read in English, Spanish, or Chinese as long as you help your child develop a reading habit.
- *Monitor TV watching*. Turn off the TV and limit viewing. Too much TV viewing takes time away from other activities. Many experts have shown that children who do things other than watch TV usually do better in math and science in school. When you do let your child watch TV, look for high-quality educational programs, and watch and discuss programs with your child to help build a habit of critical reflection.

Source:

Helping children learn at home. (1997, March 27). *Pointers for Parents* (National Science and Technology Week Publication SP/96-8). Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation.

Prepared for Parent News by Dawn Ramsburg

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Of Interest

Food Preferences in Infants

The July 1995 issue of *Good Housekeeping* included an interesting tidbit of information. Titled "From Yuck to Yum," the article is based on research conducted at the University of Illinois on babies food preferences. In the study, babies were fed a pureed food (peas or green beans) for ten consecutive days. On the tenth day, the babies ate about twice as much of the food as they had the previous nine days. The *GH* article suggests parents keep this in mind when offering new foods to their infants. A bit of persistence at introducing and serving a nutritious food may result in the child's developing a preference for it and may be worth the frustration experienced in the early days.

The article also notes that breast-fed babies are less likely to refuse new foods, possibly because the flavor of the breast milk changes according to the mother's diet.

Source:

From yuck to yum. (1995, July). *Good Housekeeping*, p. 70.

Prepared for Parent News by Debbie Reese

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

A Design for Family Support: Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

This 1996 training guide is intended to help Head Start staff develop the essential partnership-building skills that contribute to Head Start's overall effectiveness as a supportive, family-centered community. Each of the guide's three modules details module outcomes, key concepts, and background information. Module 1 defines family support in terms of principles and practices, and it provides activities to clarify the ways staff and the agency can move forward in showing families that they are part of a caring Head Start community. Building blocks for developing a community of family supports are discussed, practiced, and assessed by staff. Module 2 addresses essential skills for working with families by giving staff the opportunity to examine and practice two essential skills for building partnerships with families: partnership talk and joining with a family. This module also encourages skill development in addressing challenging behaviors that may surface in individuals during staff-family meetings, and situations that may impede the partnership-building process. Module 3 addresses mobilizing family strengths. The guide's section on continuing professional development provides useful activities for expanding and reinforcing staff skills in family support. The resources section describes books, journals, newsletters, information systems, organizations, and audiovisual materials that offer in-depth information on the topics addressed in this guide. PS025373

Head Start Publications
Management Center
P.O. Box 26417
Alexandria, VA 22313-0417

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30 Simple Things Parents Can Do to Help Keep Children Safe from Violence ($3.50, includes shipping)

This 1995 brochure provides specific steps for parents to keep children safe from violence, particularly gun violence. The first section lists six basic requirements: (1) love, (2) nonviolence, (3) communication, (4) confronting child abuse, (5) advocating for children, and (6) denormalizing violence. The second section lists six steps parents can take at home: (1) supervising children, (2) teaching safety, (3) not using illegal drugs, (4) not having guns at home, (5) teaching children to avoid guns, and (6) making the home safe. The third section lists nine steps to take in the neighborhood: (1) know your neighbors, (2) work for safe neighborhoods, (3) create a safety word, (4) keep children's name off their clothing, (5) explore safe school routes, (6) form a neighborhood watch, (7) volunteer at school, (8) stop violent situations, and (9) create a neighborhood parenting circle. The fourth section lists five steps to take in the marketplace: (1) working for responsible television use, (2) objecting to violence, (3) discouraging weapon play, (4) challenging gun manufacturers, and (5) monitoring local businesses. The final section lists four steps to initiate with government officials, specifically working with them to: (1) prevent youth violence, (2) limit nonsporting firearms, (3) encourage character and conflict resolution education, and (4) make children's safety an election issue. PS025492

Children's Defense Fund
122 C St. NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-628-8787

Families, Communities, Schools--Learning Together

This 1996 collection of articles compiled by Ruth Anne Landsverk and published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides ideas and solutions for creating and improving family, community, and school partnerships. A broad variety of topics are covered in the 19 articles of this issue, including: (1) ideas for celebrating American Education Week; (2) 10 tips for family reading; (3) reading aloud to older children; (4) using take-home folders to inspire kindergartners to love reading; (5) 25 ideas for communicating curriculum goals to families; (6) teacher tips for communicating with families to ensure student success; (7) parent advisory councils; (8) tips for family involvement practices at the high school level; (9) characteristics of successful partnership schools; (10) steps and questions for schools to use to get organized with family-community-school partnership efforts; (11) three samples of family-school partnership board policies; (12) the national family-school partnership mission statement and partnership promise; (13) tips for connecting immigrant parents and schools; (14) involving parents in schoolwork through the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) program; (15) teaching character education including courage, honesty, respect, and responsibility; (16) directory of resources for family-community-school partnerships; (17) six types of family-community participation; and (18) checklist for schools for making partnerships work. PS024389

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Eisenberg, Arlene; And Others. (1994). ***What to Expect: The Toddler Years*****. Workman Publishing, 708 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-9555 ($15.95).**

This guide, written for parents, explains what parents need to know about the second and third year of their child's life. Part 1 is organized by chronological age, with each of 16 chapters devoted to one or two months of development. Sections in each chapter are: (1) "What Your Toddler May Be Doing Now," a monthly or quarterly milestone scale of achievements; (2) ìWhat You Can Expect at the Checkup," medical procedures and tips for well-baby checkups; (3) "What You May Be Concerned About," typical parental concerns for toddlers, organized in a question-answer format; (4) "What It's Important for You to Know," information on typical child development problems and suggestions for parents to encourage their child's development; and (5) "What It's Important for Your Toddler to Know," specific areas of learning such as kindness toward animals, manners, reading as a fun activity, sharing, and sorting through gender roles. Specific areas covered include language development, play, television viewing, making friends, fears and phobias, traveling, self-esteem, creativity and imagination, temperamental and individual differences, parent-toddler communication, the Superchild Syndrome, lying, understanding rules, right and wrong, giving and sharing, gender roles, and grandparents. Part 2 addresses toddler care, health, and safety. The seven chapters present a toddler care primer and discuss feeding toddlers, toilet learning, keeping toddlers healthy, keeping toddlers safe, treating toddler injuries, and special needs children. Part 3 addresses the toddler in the family. Three chapters discuss siblings, parenting toddlers, and nonparental care. Part 4 is a ready reference. PS025239

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2. Merkel-Holguin, Lisa. (1996). Children Who Lose Their Parents to HIV/AIDS: Agency Guidelines for Adoptive and Kinship Placement. Child Welfare League of America, Child and Family Press, 440 First St. NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20001-2085.

Across the United States and the world, children who lose their parents to HIV/AIDS are one of the fastest emerging groups affected by this epidemic. Increasingly, child welfare and family service agencies are helping infected parents to secure legal and permanent care arrangements for their children. These guidelines address the issues of placing children who lose their parents to HIV/AIDS with kin and with adoptive families. The guidelines are intended to help child welfare agencies develop culturally competent, comprehensive kinship care and adoption services that respond to the needs of parents who are HIV infected, of children who lose their parents to HIV/AIDS, and of subsequent caregivers. The guidelines are set out in six chapters: (1) "Preparing for the Provision of Placement Services," (2) "Outreach to and Support Services for Biological Parents and Other Caregivers Who Are HIV Positive," (3) "Selecting Kin and Recruiting Adoptive Families," (4) "Preparing Families and Children for Placement," (5) "Postplacement Support Services," and (6) "Advocacy and Collaboration." Ten appendices include a list of child welfare agencies working with HIV-affected families, by state; a list of Family Builders Network members; a description of financial assistance programs; a list of summer camps for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS; a suggested reading list; and a resource list of national organizations. PS025409

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3. Eisenberg, Arlene; And Others. (1996). What to Expect the First Year. Workman Publishing, 708 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-9555 (U.S., $13.95; Canada, $19.95).

This book is a comprehensive month-by-month guide covering parents' questions about the first year with a new baby. It includes illustrated baby care primers, a first-aid guide, and recipes. It also contains special sections on the older sibling, selecting the right physician, seasonal concerns and traveling with baby, managing childhood illnesses, nurturing the adopted baby, the low-birthweight infant, and the baby with specific problems. Part 1 contains 15 chapters: (1) "Get Ready Get Set: Feeding Your Baby, Breast or Bottle"; (2) "Buying for Your Baby"; (3) "Your Newborn Baby"; and Chapters 4 through 15, which cover the first through twelfth months of the child's life, respectively. Part 2 contains the following chapters: (16) "A Baby for All Seasons"; (17) "When Baby is Sick"; (18) "First Aid Do's and Don'ts"; (19) "The Low-Birthweight Baby"; (20) "The Baby with Problems"; (21) "The Adopted Baby"; (22) "The First Postpartum Days"; (23) "Surviving the First Six Weeks"; (24) "Enjoying the First Year"; (25) "Becoming a Father"; and (26) "From Only Child to Older Child." Most of the 26 chapters contain the following sections: What You May Be Concerned About, What It's Important to Know, and What You Can Expect This Month. Part 3 is a ready reference that contains the following sections: Best-Odds Recipes for the First Year and Beyond, Common Home Remedies, Common Childhood Illnesses, Height and Weight Charts, and an index. PS025328

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4. LeShawn, Eda. (1997). Grandparenting in a Changing World. Newmarket Press, 18 East 48th St., New York, NY 10017; telephone: 212-832-3575; fax: 212-832-3629 ($11.95, plus shipping).

This book explores grandparenting at a time when roles and challenges facing grandparents are changing. Chapter one addresses "Grandparents in a Changing World" and describes grandparenting styles. Chapter two focuses on the "Unfinished Business between Adult Children and Their Parents" and how a grandchild complicates this relationship. Chapter three addresses the raising of children and what role grandparents have in the process. Chapter four provides a primer on the "Ages and Stages of Child Development." Chapter five addresses relating to teenage grandchildren. Chapter six focuses on grandparents confronted with unsettling situations involving their grandchildren. Chapter seven addresses grandparent rights and problems that can interfere with their relationship with their children and grandchildren. Chapter eight addresses divorce and grandparent rights. Chapter nine discusses tragedies involving grandchildren and how to respond. Chapter 10 focuses on visits from grandchildren. Chapter 11 addresses grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. Chapter 12 addresses "Three Generations Living Together." Chapter 13 focuses on changes in grandparents' marital status and how to explain these changes. Chapter 14 addresses the issue of aging and its impact on the grandparent and grandchild relationship. Chapter 15 comments on the role of therapy in today's society. Chapter 16 describes the grandparent's role in providing unconditional love to the grandchild. Final sections list grandparenting resources (support groups, publications, a videotape, and a newsletter), a 22-item bibliography, and four children's books that grandparents may want to buy for their grandchildren. PS025489

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5. Wylie, Cathy; And Others. (1996). Competent Children at 5: Families and Early Education.

Distribution Services, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, P.O. Box 3237, Wellington, New Zealand (New Zealand, $29.70).

The longitudinal "Competent Children" project is intended to discover what impact children's family resources and early childhood education experiences have on the development of children's cognitive, social, communicative, and problem-solving competencies. This report details findings of the first stage of the project. The report describes the competencies of 307 children in the Wellington region of Australia, in the context of their family background, home activities, the length of their early childhood education experience, and the quality of their current early childhood experience as they approach 5 years of age. More specifically, children's competencies are detailed in the context of: (1) constancy in their lives; (2) family resources; (3) their home activities; (4) patterns of early childhood education services (ECS); (5) the ECS resources, staff development, planning, assessment, and behavior rules; (6) children's experiences in early childhood services; and (7) ECS quality. The associations of children's competencies with home and ECS resources are also presented. The report examines the reasons why ECS resources seem to have different effects on different competencies, as well as why the considerable differences between family incomes were not associated with comparable differences in the quality of ECS attended by children from well-resourced and poorly resourced homes. Results noted in the report include: as they approached 5 years of age, the majority of children were confident in their communication with others, could look after their own dressing and toileting, and solve problems in their exploration, games, and construction activities. Most were familiar with books and with numbers. Family income and mother's educational qualifications were most strongly associated with differences in levels of children's competencies. Girls tended to show more perseverance than boys, while boys tended to show more inquisitiveness than girls. Children's competencies were also affected by the length of their early childhood education experience, by the quality of their current early childhood education experience, and by the type and cost of such services. The report also discusses the implications of this research for policy makers, ECS practitioners, parents, and researchers. PS024882

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

College Parents of America

College Parents of America is a new nonprofit organization that was formed to serve parents of current and prospective college students. The group will advocate for parents on campuses and Capitol Hill and keep parents informed about developments in college and financial-aid policies. It also hopes to offer products and services such as discounts on educational travel and computers. Membership is $25 per year or $45 per two years.

Contact:

College Parents of America
2000 N. 14th St., Suite 380
Arlington, VA 22201
Telephone: 703-875-2042

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) is a national nonprofit network of 400 affiliates and nearly 50,000 volunteers who teach adult Americans to read, write, and speak English.

Contact:

Literacy Volunteers of America
635 James St.
Syracuse, NY 13203
Email: Lvanat@aol.com

Parent Information Center

The Parent Information Center (PIC) was funded in 1976 by the U.S. Department of Education to provide information, referral, training, and support to parents of children with disabilities. PIC services are available to all parents and family members, whether or not they have a child with a disability.

Contact:

Parent Information Center
Central Office
P.O. Box 2405
Concord, NH 03302-2405
V/TDD: 603-224-7005
Telephone: NH Only: 800-232-0986
Telephone: NH Only: 800-947-7005
Fax: 603-224-4365
Email: picnh@aol.com

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters/Magazines

Kidbits

Kidbits is an electronic newsletter for parents edited by pediatrician Stephen D. Schneider. The issues contain information on health, behavior, consumer, and safety news. There are also parenting tips for infants and children of all ages. Recent topics covered concerns such as asthma, dehydration, fainting spells, teenagers and over-the-counter medicines, and school absenteeism.

URL: http://www.kidbits.com
Email: schneider@kidbits.com

The Montessori Observer

This quarterly newsletter is designed to provide more information and news about the International Montessori Society's work in education and to increase awareness of Montessori principles throughout the world. Recent articles include information on ways to assist with separation anxiety using the Montessori philosophy, handling negativity, and standardized testing in the Montessori classroom. ($20.00, which includes membership to the Society).

The Montessori Observer
912 Thayer Ave., Suite 207
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: 310-589-1127
URL: http://www.wdn.com/trust/ims

PPT Express: A Newsletter for teachers and others Working with Pregnant and parenting teens

Published quarterly, this newsletter provides resources, information, and support for those professionals working with pregnant and parenting teens. A recent issue included articles on new books, pamphlets, and education resources; information on the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; teaching budgeting; and using a dollhouse as an educational resource for teaching young parents about child safety.

PPT Express
Morning Glory Press, Inc.
6595 San Haroldo Way

Buena Park, CA 90620-3748
Telephone: 714-828-1998

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Association of Birth Defect Children (ABDC)

Description: The Association of Birth Defect Children (ABDC) is a charitable organization started by parents in 1982. It provides free phone information to parents and professionals about all kinds of birth defects, resources, support groups, and environmental exposures that may cause birth defects. Written materials, special reports, and newsletters are available to ABDC members. The site features descriptions of ABDC's projects and services including the National Birth Defects Registry and Birth Defects Fact Sheets.

Address: http://www.birthdefects.org/mainp.htm

Name: Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

Description: Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is a national, nonprofit organization with more than 400 affiliates worldwide. PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons and their families and friends through support, education, and advocacy.

Address: http://www.pflag.org/

Name: Parenting Q & A

Description: Parenting Q & A provides answers to parenting questions in four ways. (1) users can choose the table of contents for the database and select a topic; (2) users can type in a question; (3) users can search the whole database; or (4) users can submit a question to Parenting Q & A. This site is sponsored by Family Information Services.

Address: http://www.parenting-qa.com/

Name: All About Kids

Description: This monthly magazine, available in print and online, serves families in Ohio and Kentucky. It features in-depth articles on a wide range of topics such as teacher conferences, disabilities, mothers returning to school, and bedtime routines. Contact information (for those who want to learn more about the topic) is provided with most articles. Most of the other material available on the site is specific to Ohio and Kentucky. Information is also available on two online discussion groups (forums).

Address: http://www.aak.com

Name: YouthInfo

Description: YouthInfo is intended to provide the latest information about America's adolescents. The site contains: (1) a statistical profile of America's teenagers, (2) reports and publications about adolescents, (3) information for parents of teenagers, and (4) links to related resources. This site is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Address: http://youth.os.dhhs.gov/

Name: healthfinder tm

Description: The healthfinder tm site is a gateway to consumer health and human services information. It can lead users to selected online publications, clearinghouses, databases, Web sites, and support and self-help groups. In addition, it lists government agencies and nonprofit organizations that produce relevant information. It is expected that the information found can help users and their families make better choices about health and human services needs.

Address: http://www.healthfinder.gov/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for July 1997

The PARENTING Calendar

Note: NPIN now features a *brand new* PARENTING Calendar, graphically formatted (like printed calendars) in order to make it easier to find and view each month's announcements and conferences. With the new graphical calendars, you may now download and/or print each month's calendar for your personal use. Only newly-announced items from the PARENTING Calendar will now be included in Parent News. For a full listing of conferences, go to the new PARENTING Calendar section of NPIN.

Announcements

For the 17th year, the Summer Institute of the Wheelock College Center for Parenting Studies is bringing together professionals from many disciplines who want to learn more about contemporary issues in parenting and how to be more effective in supporting and working with families.

The Summer Institute has been planned in intensive 3- and 4-day seminars and courses to meet the needs of practicing professionals. There will be 11 courses/seminars offered, with the first beginning on June 30, 1997. Some of the topics covered in these courses include parent counseling, supporting dysfunctional families, organizing parent groups, working with difficult children and parents, home visiting, working with parents and families of diverse cultures, family violence, and review of child development for professionals who work with parents.

For more information, please contact:

The Center for Parenting Studies
Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
Boston, MA 02215-4176
Telephone: 617-734-5200, ext. 214

Conferences

CONFERENCE: La Leche League International Conference

Date: July 3-6, 1997

Place: Washington, DC Hilton

Description: La Leche League International is celebrating 40 years of mother-to-mother support of breastfeeding and nurturing parenting. The conference will feature speakers from all the world covering a wide variety of topics including breastfeeding; parenting from infancy through the teen years; sessions just for fathers; and children, nutrition, and medical issues.

Contact:

La Leche League
Telephone: 800-La-Leche

CONFERENCE: 12th Annual Early Intervention/Early Childhood Summer Institute

Date: July 28 - August 1, 1997

Place: Williamsburg, Virginia

Description: This is the 12th Annual Early Intervention/Early Childhood Summer Institute.

Contact:

Lisa McKean
Child Development Resources
P.O. Box 280
Norge, VA 23127-0280
Telephone: 757-566-3300
Fax: 757-566-8977
Email: resources@gc.net

CONFERENCE: Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) 16th Annual Conference

Date: September 11-14, 1997

Place: Orlando, Florida

Description: The 16th annual conference of PFLAG will include screenings of the videos "It's Elementary" and "All God's Children," Leadership Plenary sessions with noted experts, workshops and presentations, computer/Internet training, and an auction.

Contact:

PFLAG
1101 14th St. NW
Suite 1030

Washington, DC 20005

or

The Balcom Group
Telephone: 202-234-3880
Email: balcomgrp@aol.com

CONFERENCE: Child Care, Communities, Collaborations & Connections

Date: October 1-3, 1997

Place: Kansas City, Missouri

Description: The North Central Regional Rally--Children, Youth & Families is having a conference called "Child Care, Communities, Collaborations & Connections." This conference is being sponsored by Cooperative Extension's National Network for Child Care, National Network for Collaborations, and National Network for Science and Technology. Conference workshops will be presented in the context of child care issues as they relate to welfare reform, work force preparation, evaluation, parent education, science and technology, community collaborations, and family, center, and school-age child care. Anyone with child care interested in the context of community collaborations is encouraged to attend.

Contact:

Marlene Glasscock
National Network for Child Care
School of Family Studies and Human Services
Justin 303, Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
Telephone: 913-532-1484
Fax: 913-532-5505
Email: glass@humec.ksu.edu

CONFERENCE: Families, Technology, and Education Conference

Date: October 30 - November 1, 1997

Place: Itasca, Illinois

Description: Just as the automobile changed family life and expectations, creating not only new opportunities but also unexpected challenges, so are new electronic technologies changing the ways we raise and educate our children. This conference will provide opportunities to reflect on the nature of current and emerging technologies and on the ways they affect family life and the education of children. The impact of the Internet, new telephone technologies, television, and other media will be the focus of discussions. Presenters at the conference will include technology experts, policymakers, program planners, educators, parents, and parenting professionals. The conference is intended to address the needs of many types of professionals who work with families, including family support personnel, educators, corporate executives, media specialists, librarians, health care specialists, publishers, and information systems developers. The conference will provide attendees with an increased awareness of the technologies available to children, families, and communities, an increased awareness of how to use technologies to serve their communities, and opportunities to interact with leaders, colleagues, and parents in order to better understand the impact of technology on family culture and children's education.

Contact:

Anne S. Robertson, Program Chair
National Parent Information Network
ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 800-583-4135
Email: arobrtsn@uiuc.edu
URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/fte/ftehome.html

Return to the Parent News for July 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

July 1997
PARENTING Calendar

This calendar lists conferences, workshops, and other parenting-related events. For events lasting more than one day, the event is listed on the first day, with a note of how long the event lasts. To read a description of an event, click on the highlighted portion. If you would like to submit information about a parent-related event not currently listed in the PARENTING calendar, send complete information (similar to an event already listed in this calendar) to Anne Robertson, NPIN Coordinator. New items contributed to the PARENTING Calendar are also featured in the monthly Parent News.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 La Leche League International Conference (through July 6)	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 National F.R.E.E. Conference on Fatherhood, Co-Parenting, and Disunited Families (through July 20)	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 12th Annual Early Intervention/Early Childhood Summer Institute (through Aug. 1)	29	30	31		

June 1997 ◀ July 1997 ▶ **August 1997**

Go to the Descriptions of events for July 1997.
Return to the Calendar introduction page.

NPIN

National Parent Information Network

Parent News for August 1997

Volume 3, Number 8

- What's New on NPIN
- August's Feature:
  Making the Internet Family-Friendly: How Parents Can Help
  by Dawn Ramsburg
- Community Spotlight:
  Are You Worried about Your New Teen Driver?
  by Tom Deats
- Of Interest:
  - *1997 KIDS COUNT Data Book Released*
  - *Living in a Stepfamily: Neither Cinderella or the Brady Bunch* by Dawn Ramsburg
  - *Psychologists Offer Back to School Tips to Parents: Resiliency, the "First Day," School Phobias, and Homework*
  - *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*
  - *Census Bureau Releases Household & Family Characteristics*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for August 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during July 1997

NPIN now features a *brand new* PARENTING Calendar, graphically formatted (like printed calendars) in order to make it easier to find and view each month's announcements and conferences. With the new graphical calendars, you may now download and/or print each month's calendar (and even hang it on your refrigerator!). The new PARENTING Calendar also features a detailed listing of announcements and conferences by month, as well as an alphabetical listing of conferences by title and sponsor.

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following resources have been added:

- *Teaching Children Not To Be -- or Be Victims of -- Bullies*
  Offers tips on how to teach children assertiveness skills in order to promote positive interactions among children.

In the Early Childhood: Learning section, the following resources have been added:

- *Phonics and Whole Language Learning*
  Offers tips for helping children learn to read.
- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Families*
  The first several sections of this document were added to NPIN in June 1997. The balance of the sections were added in July.

In the Helping Children Learn at Home section, the following resources have been added:

- *Family Support Programs and Family Literacy*
  Provides an overview of family support programs, describes ways of encouraging family literacy, highlights five program models, and lists resource organizations.
- *Helping Children Learn about Reading*
  Offers tips for families who want their children to learn the connection between meanings and words.
- *Phonics and Whole Language Learning*
  Offers tips for helping children learn to read.
- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Families*

The first several sections of this document were added to NPIN in June 1997. The balance of the sections were added in July.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *After the Stand: Be a Children's Champion*
  Discusses five steps you can take to become an active and effective "Children's Champion," along with several strategies and activities for each step.
- *Family Support Programs and the Prevention of Child Abuse*
  Provides an overview of family support programs, discusses the issue of child abuse and the issue of child abuse prevention, highlights five program models, and lists resource organizations.

In the Parents and Schools as Partners section, the following resources have been added:

- *Back to School Time: Tips to Help Children Adjust.*
  Offers tips for parents, teachers, and early childhood professionals to help children adjust to school.
- *Family Support Programs and Family Literacy*
  Provides an overview of family support programs, describes ways of encouraging family literacy, highlights five program models, and lists resource organizations.
- *Family Support Programs and the Prevention of Child Abuse*
  Provides an overview of family support programs, discusses the issue of child abuse and the issue of child abuse prevention, highlights five program models, and lists resource organizations.
- *Family Support Programs and School Readiness*
  Identifies premises of family support and typical program components, describes characteristics of family support school initiatives, defines school readiness, highlights four program models, and lists resource organizations.
- *Helping Children Learn about Reading*
  Offers tips for families who want their children to learn the connection between meanings and words.
- *Organizing a Successful Family Center in Your School*
  A booklet designed to help school staff members, parents, and community leaders understand how family centers can promote family participation and strengthen their schools. The booklet is also a guide for establishing a family center.
- *Phonics and Whole Language Learning*
  Offers tips for helping children learn to read.
- *Teaching Children Not To Be -- or Be Victims of -- Bullies*
  Offers tips on how to teach children assertiveness skills in order to promote positive interactions among children.
- *Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten Program*
  Outlines characteristics of a good kindergarten classroom.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Children Who Lose Their Parents to HIV/AIDS: Agency Guidelines for Adoptive and Kinship Placement* by Lisa Merkel-Holguin
- *What to Expect the First Year* by Arlene Eisenberg and Others
- *What to Expect: The Toddler Years* by Arlene Eisenberg and Others

- *Grandparenting in a Changing World* by Eda LeShawn
- *Competent Children at 5: Families and Early Education* by Cathy Wylie and Others

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- College Parents of America
- Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.
- Parent Information Center

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Kidbits*
- *The Montessori Observer*
- *PPT Express: A Newsletter for teachers and others Working with Pregnant and Parenting Teens*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

August's Feature

Making the Internet Family-Friendly: How Parents Can Help

by Dawn Ramsburg

On June 26, 1997, the Supreme Court ruled that the Communications Decency Act (CDA), the law which would have limited communication on the Internet to what is suitable for minors, was unconstitutional. According to the opinion written by Justice John Paul Stevens, "Speech on the Internet is entitled to the highest level of First Amendment protection, similar to the protection the Court gives to books and newspapers (Greenhouse, 1997)." While the Court regarded the law's goal as legitimate and important, Justice Sandra Day O' Connor described the law as clearly unconstitutional because it was "akin to a law that makes it a crime for a bookstore owner to sell pornographic magazines to anyone once a minor enters the store (Greenhouse, 1997)."

In the wake of the Supreme Court decision, Mary Somerville at the American Library Association stated that, "The Supreme Court ruling means that Americans will enjoy the same access to information in cyberspace that we have on library and bookstore shelves. It means parents can decide for their own children what they do--and don't--want them to read (American Library Association, 1997)." However, it is precisely because the responsibility for children's online activities falls on those who watch over them--parents, teachers, librarians--that considerable discussion has occurred in recent weeks over how to create a safe, educational environment on the Internet without infringing upon the First Amendment right of free speech.

To help facilitate those discussions, the White House convened a meeting on July 16, 1997 with leaders representing companies in the Internet industry and organizations representing education, children, parents, consumers, and law enforcement. President Clinton and Vice President Gore announced a strategy at this meeting for making the Internet family-friendly as well as First Amendment-friendly, so that it will be both safe and rewarding for users and still enjoy First Amendment rights. The White House strategy is designed to give parents and teachers the tools they need to prevent children from getting access to inappropriate material on the Internet, and to guide them towards high-quality educational resources.

The three-prong strategy is to:

1. make blocking and filtering software for parents widely available;
2. increase enforcement efforts of existing laws which prohibit transmission of child pornography and obscenity over the Internet--which were not affected by the Court's decision on the CDA and which are not protected by the First Amendment; and,
3. encourage greater parental involvement by increasing education efforts on how to use the Internet effectively.

Examples of some of the commitments made by the computer industry at this meeting include:

- Having over 90 percent of World Wide Web "browsers" include Internet filtering technology, as Netscape announced it will join Microsoft by incorporating this software in their next major release. This technology, called Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS), allows parents to choose from a variety of rating systems to block sites that are considered inappropriate for children.
- Major computer manufacturers (Acer, Apple Computer, Compaq, IBM, and Packard Bell) will bundle home PCs with filtering software and most Internet service providers will offer filtering software for free, or for a small fee. This software allows parents to block objectionable sites, and some can limit the amount of time that a child spends online, or prevent a child from typing personal information in an online chat-room.
- Internet directory companies (such as Yahoo, Excite, and Lycos) are promoting the use of "ratings" of Internet sites for use by filtering technology.

More specific recommendations and further commitments by the industry, organizations, and companies are anticipated to come from the "Families Online Summit" to be held in October 1997.

What Does the Internet Offer Families?

With all of this concern over Internet safety, some parents may wonder why they should bother with the Internet. What does the Internet offer families? While it is true that there is much to be wary of in cyberspace, Wendy Lazurus, co-director of the Children's Partnership, points out that "The Internet is an excellent resource for families and it is becoming an even richer one for information and educational activities (Harmon, 1997)."

Some of the ways that your family might use the Internet include:

1. finding reference information on the news, weather, sports, product reviews, and people;
2. conducting transactions such as travel reservations, banking, and shopping;
3. communicating with people around the world;
4. finding educational information on virtually any topic, such as homework help;
5. providing entertainment; and,
6. enhancing computing by accessing online free pubic domain software titles.

Children can benefit emotionally and socially from the Internet as well. For example, being online allows children to escape from their physical selves and to experiment with their identity in a less self-conscious way than in person (Rubenstein, 1996). That is, no one will necessarily know if you are a boy or a girl, if you have a disability, if you are shy, or if you have the right clothes on or the right haircut. Children can also express their fears and concerns with less embarrassment and greater openness than many are able to do in real life.

General Safety Tips

Despite the many benefits of the Internet, there are some risks for children who use online services. However, just as you teach your child rules about dealing with strangers outside the home, help them pick out books at the library, and talk with them about what stores they are allowed to visit, rules for communicating online must also be established.

The American Library Association (1997) suggests that children:

- Always ask an adult for permission before using their name, address, telephone number or school

name while online;
- Always tell a parent or other adult if they see something scary or confusing on the Internet;
- Never respond to messages that make them feel uncomfortable;
- Never give out a credit card number or password online; and
- Never arrange to meet someone they have met online, unless they discuss it with their parents and an adult goes with them.

It is a good idea to establish general rules and guidelines for computer use for home or school around such issues as the amount of time that can be spent daily online. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1994) suggests posting these rules near the computer as a reminder. They also remind parents to make computer use a family activity, and to consider putting the computer in a family room rather than the child's bedroom. They point out that these strategies will allow parents more opportunities to get to know their children's online friends just as they would get to know of their other friends.

For additional protection, parents may also want to use blocking and filtering software, like those mentioned as part of the White House strategy, to reduce some of the risks of finding inappropriate material online. The filters block obscene or pornographic material by maintaining a list of objectionable Web sites or by scanning the Web for objectionable terms and blocking Web pages which contain those terms (Children, Youth and Family Consortium, 1997). This technology is not foolproof, however. For filters which maintain a list of sites, there are so many new sites added to the Web each day that the lists need to be updated continually. In addition, it is very time-consuming for parents to review and edit lists to ensure that they are blocking only what should be blocked and are not too restrictive.

For products which block material by scanning for offensive words, most are not capable of blocking only offensive material. Instead, they may unintentionally block sites which could contain useful, educational materials that families need or would like to know about (CYFC, 1997). In addition, many Web site producers are also skilled in using words with double meanings that may appear harmless to the scanners.

Evaluating Material Found Online

Once safety rules have been established for online activities, the next step is to learn how to evaluate the quality of the information found on the Internet. According to the University of Minnesota's Children, Youth and Family Consortium (1997), there are three essential components to consider:

- content (the information contained in the Web site);

- authorship (the creator, organization, and/or possibly the publisher of a Web site); and,
- readability (the ease with which information can be read, viewed, navigated, and understood by the user).

Some important questions to ask when evaluating a Web site include:

- What is the purpose of the information?
- Is it age-appropriate?
- Is there an author or sponsor listed?
- Is the author/sponsor credible?
- What is the nature of the sponsor (commercial, nonprofit, education)?
- How often is the information updated?
- How easy is it to navigate the site?
- Is the material copyrighted? Is proper credit given for material protected by the copyright law?

The CYFC asserts that the better web sites contain accurate information, from a reliable source, that's clearly articulated and easy to use.

Conclusion

Sooner or later, nearly all children will be exposed to the Internet--if not at home, then at school or at the library. No software package or government regulation can be a suitable substitute for adult guidance. Knowing this, parents must be available to supervise their children when they are using computers, just as they would supervise other activities. In addition to helping making children's time on the Internet safer, spending time with your child online can help your child learn responsibility, good conduct, and the values that are important to your family. The key to making the Internet family-friendly is continued sharing responsibility among government agencies, the Internet industry, and parents.

Additional Resources

Internet

The Families, Technology, and Education Conference in late October will address issues related to child safety on the Internet.

"Child Safety on the Internet Superhighway," developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

"FreeZone Safety Tips for Parents and Teachers," developed by FreeZone.

"A Guide to Internet Parenting," developed by the Voters Telecommunications Watch.

"The Librarian's Guide to Cyberspace for Parents and Kids," developed by the American Library Association.

"Newsweek Parent's Guide to Children's Software," developed by Newsweek magazine.

"The Parent's Guide to the Information Superhighway: Rules and Tools for Families Online," developed by The Children's Partnership, working with the National PTA and the National Urban League.

"Surfin the Net for Kids and Families," sponsored by Metronet and the University of Minnesota Children, Youth, and Family Consortium.

Books

The Connected Family: Bridging the Digital Generation Gap, by Seymour Papert (Longstreet Press; $22.95)

The Dummies Guide to Family Computing: The World Wide Web for Kids and Parents, by Viraf D. Mohta (IDG; $22.99)

The Dummies Guide to Family Computing: Take Charge of Computing for Teens and Parents, by Pam Dixon (IDG; $22.99)

Internet Kids & Family Yellow Pages, Second Edition, by Jean Armour Polly (Osborne/McGraw-Hill; $19.99)

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Community Spotlight

Are You Worried About Your New Teen Driver?

By Tom Deats

When an adolescent reaches driving age, many parents feel uncertain about how to guide or instruct their teen. While the teenager may be pleased with his or her new sense of freedom, this increased independence also requires an increased acceptance of responsibility. Tom Deats, a Texas police officer, is fully aware of the consequences of unsafe or irresponsible teen driving. As a veteran police officer he has witnessed many accidents and some deaths which involved young drivers. A turning point in his life came shortly after he delivered a death notification to parents of a teen who had been involved in an automobile accident. He began to wonder if there were something that could be done to help parents instruct their children in the risks and responsibilities of driving. 4MYTEEN is a nonprofit program that has been developed out of that concern and is endorsed by the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas.

As the Parent of two teenage drivers and a working Police Officer for more than 22 years--on the beat every night--I often worry about my teens' driving. I have seen first-hand the tragedies caused by irresponsible, unsafe, dangerous teen driving. I have delivered too many death notifications to parents of teen drivers killed in automobile accidents, and have witnessed too often the perception of immortality embraced by our new teen drivers, and the looks on their faces when reality hits as they attend the funeral of one of their peers.

Many citizens, especially parents of toddlers playing in a neighborhood, would stop me while I was on patrol and complain about teen drivers. I explained to them that unless an offense or behavior occurred in my presence, there was very little I could do. The thought also occurred to me that I was the wrong one to hear the complaint. The parents of these teen drivers, who buy the insurance and provide the cars, are the ones who most need to know about their teens' driving habits.

Following a plea from citizens on my beat to do something about teens racing through their neighborhoods, I decided, in my own small way, to try to make a difference and change dangerous teen driving behaviors. I knew I had to get the parents of the teen drivers involved. My problem was how do I get this report to the parents of these teen drivers?

While on patrol of our local interstate highways, I found myself behind an 18-wheeler with the message " HOW'S MY DRIVING- Call 1-800----." and it hit me. Why not take this same concept and apply to on a smaller scale to teen drivers? On that day, in 1994, 4MY TEEN was born.

With the help of my wife and some friends, we designed a bumper sticker for placement on the rear windshield or bumper of the teen's car that reads "HOW'S MY DRIVING-CALL 1-800-4MY TEEN." Parents register their teen drivers with 4MY TEEN, including information about the car the teen drives. This information is entered into a database. As compliments or complaints about teen driving are called into the toll-free hotline, a report of the behavior is generated and sent to the parents of the teen driver. Parents then take whatever action they deem appropriate. Did I say teen driving COMPLIMENTS?

Yes. Surprisingly, 4MYTEEN is currently receiving more teen-driving complimentary calls than complaint calls. My being the cynical COP that I am, I really didn't expect to see this. A survey conducted by the College of Small Business at the University of Texas at Arlington provided insight for many of the driving compliments 4MY TEEN is receiving. In the survey, the teens overwhelmingly state the bumper sticker "makes me paranoid" or "makes me think." If so, the program is doing exactly what it was designed to do: it's making teens think about their driving behaviors. Some of the other survey results are as follows:

Initial reaction of teens joining the service:

Very upset 0%
Slightly upset 37.5%
Indifferent 12.5%
Willing 50%

Average age of participating teen:

14 0%
15 6%
16 75%
17 18%

Perceptions by parents of improved driving:

None 18.8%
Some 43.8%
Very Much 37.5%

Would You Recommend 4MY TEEN to other parents?

Yes 93.8%
No 6.3%

The survey results provided some other interesting information. I expected the teen drivers to be more negative in their responses than they were. This finding reinforces my opinion that parents who use the 4MY TEEN service and teens who display the bumper sticker, as a group, are very responsible.

In the four years we have been providing this service, I have found that in many cases, the parents are enthusiastic about using the service but when it comes to actually implementing the placement of the sticker on their teen's car, the tail often wags the dog. The kids balk, the parents give in, and the sticker never gets put on the car. These are the kids I most worry about. These are the kids that Police Officers are likely to encounter, and unfortunately, the display of the sticker might have helped prevent accidents that these teens may have. With this in mind, let me offer some personal tips to the parents of new teen drivers. Keep in mind, these tips are my own, and based on my personal observations after 22 years in law enforcement:

1. Drive, drive, and drive; the more driving practice your teen gets before he or she gets a driver's license, the better.

2. Coach, coach, coach, and talk about the things you take for granted with your teen, such as following distance, road and weather conditions, traffic conditions, light conditions, and mental states of mind when driving.
3. Following distance- use the two-second rule. Always keep at least two-seconds between you and the car ahead. Wait 2 seconds before entering an intersection after a light change. Use three seconds when weather or light is bad.
4. Adjust for traffic conditions. Plan your driving to avoid heavy traffic, including rush hours and school beginnings, endings, and lunch breaks.
5. Restrict the new teen driver to daytime driving at first, then dusk, then nighttime
6. Never drive mad. Bad grades, fights with a girlfriend or boyfriend, or with mom or dad, can negatively impact your new teen driver's behaviors.
7. Change radios, CDs, and tapes before you start to drive (many new teen drivers have accidents when they take their eyes off the road to change a radio station, tape, or CD).
8. Restrict the number of passengers. (I can't tell you how many teen accidents I have worked because the new teen driver was looking over at a passenger in the front or back seat.)
9. Restrict eating and drinking. (Eating and drinking means only one hand is on the steering wheel; new teen drivers need both hands.)
10. Avoid left turns in front of traffic, I can't tell you how many accidents I have worked where teens turned left in front of an oncoming car because they failed to properly judge the distance or speed of the oncoming vehicle.

These tips are just a few things a parent should consider when teaching a new teen driver. The most important bit of advice I can give parents is to create an awareness of what your teen is doing in, and with, the car. 4MY TEEN does this, and if you question its effectiveness, put the 4MY TEEN bumper sticker on your car and drive. You will find yourself saying "OOPS!" more than once.

Remember, the most critical driving time in your new teen's driving career will be the first year he or she is behind the wheel. The majority of accidents in which teen drivers are involved occur during the first year of driving. 4MY TEEN is my way of trying to make a difference. If the display of the 4MY TEEN bumper sticker prevents just one teen driving accident, injury, or death, then it has all been worth it, and it's the best money a parent could spend on their new teen driver.

For more information:
4MY TEEN
P.O. Box 172225
Arlington, TX 76003-2225
1-800-4MY TEEN

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4 MY TEEN Non-Profit Statement

4MY TEEN is a non profit 501(C)(3) Corporation offering its services to communities throughout the United States and Canada. 4MY TEEN has been deemed by the Internal Revenue Service to be a publicly supported organization , and donors may deduct contributions as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

4MY TEEN is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, with the expressed intent to provide services designed to change dangerous teen driving behaviors, and save new teen drivers' lives.

4MY TEEN, through gifts, grants, donations, and charitable contributions, will make every effort to change dangerous teen driving behaviors and save lives. 4MY TEEN will educate and inform the citizenry of the positive benefits produced by safe teen driving. 4MY TEEN will encourage personal responsibility for teen driving behaviors and promote the positive results 4MY TEEN affords parents, teens, and the communities they live in.

URL: http://www.4myteen.org/teen

Please see our resources for parents section for the registration form and more information.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Of Interest

1997 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* Released

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has released its 8th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state survey of children's well-being. The purpose of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is provide information to policy makers and citizens on certain benchmarks of child well-being. The key message from this year's survey is that the 7.1 million children growing up in poor communities have the greatest need for the benefits of a good education, yet are the most likely to be served by the worst schools.

According to the report, educational reforms are needed to provide better learning opportunities for poor children. The report also provides examples of ways to create successful schools in low-income neighborhoods as well as stresses the need for entire communities to assume responsibility for improving educational outcomes.

It is noted that while there has been steady overall improvement in the nation's schools over the last 10 years, the results have not always been positive for everyone. For example, in 1994 the dropout rate for kids in low-income families was five times higher than the rate for kids in more affluent families. In addition, schools with high proportions of low-income children have been consistently found to have lower scores on standardized achievement tests. Finally, the poverty rate for high school dropouts is 10 times higher than the rate for college graduates.

In addition to such educational data, the *1997 KIDS COUNT Data Book* also updates the Casey Foundation's annual state-by-state assessment of children' well-being. Using the best available government data, the report uses 10 indicators to track the condition of children over time:

- percent of low birthweight babies
- infant mortality rate
- child death rate
- rate of teen deaths by accident, homicide or suicide
- teen birth rate
- juvenile violent crime arrests
- percent of teens who are high school dropouts
- percent of teens not in school and not working ("idle")
- percent of children in poverty
- percent of single parent families with children

Along with these data, background information on each state is provided which includes demographic, economic and health data.

Finding from the 1997 state-by-state assessment reveal that between 1985 and 1994, the well-being of American children declined in five areas. There were:

- more low birthweight babies;
- more teen deaths by accident, homicide and suicide;
- more births to teens;
- more youths arrested for violent crime; and,
- more single parent families with children.

Not all the news was bad from this assessment, however. In the following areas, the well-being of children in the U.S. improved:

- fewer infant deaths;
- a lower child death rate;
- fewer teens dropping out of school; and,
- fewer "idle" teens (not attending school and not working).

There was no change in the nationwide poverty rate, which remained at 21%.

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is not the only effort to come from the Casey Foundation this year. In February, they released the *CITY KIDS COUNT* report, which provides data on 10 key indicators of child well-being in the 50 largest U.S. cities. Those indicators include the percent of youth who are unemployed, teens who dropout of high school, and children in households receiving public assistance. On each of the 10 indicators, the 50-city average shows kids in large cities face more dire circumstances than kids in the nation as a whole. For example, according to this report, the share of children living in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of poverty, welfare dependence, unemployment, and single-parent families increased from 3 percent in 1970 to 17 percent in 1990.

Douglas Nelson, the President of the Casey Foundation states, "Conditions in communities often undermine the ability of families to raise their children well. Right now the combination of risk factors in distressed, urban neighborhoods increases the likelihood that kids growing up there will be unable to parent successfully, be productively employed, and contribute to civic life."

Nelson continues, " *CITY KIDS COUNT* suggests that meaningful efforts to improve conditions in urban communities must address a comprehensive range of issues, including human services, economic infrastructure, and institutional resources. The willingness of states to make troubled city neighborhoods a priority for investment and innovation may well determine their success in taking over many responsibilities previously performed by the federal government."

TheAnnie E. Casey Foundation is a private, charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children and families in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of the United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother.

Sources

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Annie E. Casey Foundation (1997, February 19). Soaring number of children live in distressed neighborhoods in America's largest cities [http://www.aecf.org/aefcnews/citykc.htm]

Additional Resources

To help you assess the needs of children in your community, Children Now offers a step-by-step guide to producing a community report card.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Of Interest

Living in a Stepfamily: Neither Cinderella or the Brady Bunch

by Dawn Ramsburg

In 1995, 40 percent of all marriages in the United States were remarriages for at least one of the partners, with approximately 65 percent of remarriages involving children from a prior marriage.

Despite the prevalence of remarriages in America, fictional examples like "Cinderella" or the "Brady Bunch" keep many stepfamilies from developing realistic expectations of what stepfamily life will be like. For example, single parents may think that remarriage is the solution to some of their problems as they now would have someone to share the parenting load and help maintain the household. Or, children may feel angry that they have to share their biological parent with a new spouse or even new step-siblings. Or, many stepfamilies will believe that their new family will be "just like everyone else's." It is important, however, for family members to learn that stepfamily life is not worse than, better than, or a substitute for other families; it is simply different (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995a).

There are several factors which make stepfamilies different. One of the main factors is that stepfamilies involve more people in more complex relationships. As such, the complexity of stepfamily life can lead to several problems for both children and parents which should be addressed to contribute to the success of the remarriage.

These problems include:

- *Feelings of Loss.* For adults and children, feelings of insecurity, sadness, and anger can all result from the loss of the biological family or the loss of the dream of the perfect marriage/family (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995a). For children, these feelings of loss can also lead to feelings of guilt and anger as they may feel they were responsible for the breakup of the first marriage. Or, they may feel angry because they had no input over the decisions which were made (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995b).
- *Divided Loyalties.* Children in stepfamilies often feel torn in their loyalty between their biological parent and the stepparent. Parents, too, will feel torn between their loyalty to their children and their desire for the new spouse to feel like a "real" parent (Molgaard, 1993).
- *Belonging to Two Households.* Even if children only visit their noncustodial parent, they still belong to two households, with different rules, activities, and values (Molgaard, 1993). Children may have difficulty adjusting immediately to a new set of ideas and rules (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995b).
- *Unrealistic expectations.* When stepfamily life is not what members expected, feelings of inadequacy, discouragement, anger, and disappointment can emerge (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995a).
- *Building Relationships.* Parents might want stepchildren to quickly feel love, trust, and respect, but

these feelings often take years to develop, usually about three to five years (Molgaard, 1993; Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995a). Feelings of fear can make this process even longer, however, if children are afraid that all relationships will end in failure (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995b).

- *Legal Relationships.* Unless the stepparent adopts, the legal relationship within stepfamilies exists only between husband and wife, but not between stepparent and stepchildren. This can create problems in terms of right to inheritance, school records, and medical attention (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995a).
- *Discipline by the Stepparent.* While a stepparent may want to help their spouse by taking over some of the discipline responsibilities, children often will resent stepparent discipline, thinking "You can't tell me what to do because you're not my real parent."

Coping Strategies

To minimize the stress which these problems can create, there are several coping strategies the stepfamily can try.

1. Plan activities involving different subgroups of the stepfamily to help relationships grow (Pitzer, 1990).
2. Keep up with your support system (co-workers, friends, extended family). Again, this will help relationships build. It may also be useful to seek group support (through church or community organization) from others who have had similar experiences (Molgaard, 1993).
3. Give children as many choices as possible to help them regain a sense of control for different aspects of their lives. Including children in discussions about new rules and family activities will also help eliminate their feelings of helplessness (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995).
4. Continue to reassure children that having a warm relationship with a stepparent will not endanger the relationship with the biological parent (Seymour, Francis, & Steffens, 1995).

For discipline issues:

5. Let the biological parent handle most discipline during the first few months and maybe even years for older children, since children accept guidance and discipline more easily form those they trust (Molgaard, 1993). This will allow the stepparent to focus on building a strong relationship.
6. Discuss rules and consequences as a couple (Molgaard, 1993). Talk about behavior problems and expectations with your new spouse. This allows the stepparent to be involved in discipline even though the biological parent is dealing directly with the child.
7. Leave the stepparent in charge when the biological parent is gone, making sure to tell the children (Molgaard, 1993). This helps children understand that the stepparent carries out the rules which both parents have agreed upon.

Building a healthy stepfamily takes time, just as it does for any family. To help strong relationships grow within the stepfamily, it is important to be patient and acknowledge everyone's feelings. As the family members learn what to expect from one another and what their strengths are, they can make stepfamily life work for them.

Additional Resources

Internet

Contact your local Cooperative Extension for more information on stepfamilies. Most Extension offices will have or can direct you to programs which deal with stepfamily issues. For example, the Kansas State

Research and Extension Program has developed the program, *Stepping Stones for Stepfamilies.*

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. (1995). *Stepfamily Problems.*

National Center for Fathering. *Hope for stepfathers.*

Books

Visher, E. & Visher, J. (1991). *How to win as a stepfamily.* Brunner/Mazel., 19 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003.

Webber, Ruth. (1996). *Split Ends: Teenage Stepchildren.* The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd., 19 Prospect Hill Rd., Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria 3124, Australia

Organizations

Stepfamily Association of America, Inc.
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 212
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-477-7837

Stepfamily Association of Illinois
PO Box 3124
Oak Park, IL 60303
708-848-0909

Sources

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Of Interest

Psychologists Offer Back to School Tips To Parents: Resiliency, the "First Day", School Phobias and Homework

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The following article is a release by the American Psychological Association, called "The APA Experts." The American Psychological Association in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 151,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 50 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 58 state, territorial and Canadian provincial association, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare.

Before you know, it will be time to pack lunches, do home work and start getting kids to bed on time for the 1997-98 school year. Leading child and adolescent development psychologists have a few tips for parents of children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Building Resiliency

How do you help a child who continually says things like, "I'm no good" or "I'm stupid?" Pessimism – the belief that troubles will never end and are always the fault of the pessimist – can end up turning into depression, according to psychologist Martin Seligman, Ph.D., an expert on child resilience from the University of Pennsylvania.

What can parents do to reverse pessimism? "This is not a self-esteem problem. You can teach your child to think optimistically which will prevent depression," says Dr. Seligman, author of *The Optimistic Child* and *Learned Optimism.* He suggests teaching children to challenge their belief that they are the cause of an adversity. For example, children who miss a goal in soccer and say, "I'm no good," should be reminded that during the game, many goals were missed, not only theirs. By teaching children to question their negative beliefs about themselves, you build their resiliency and increase their chances for success in school and in life." he adds.

The First Day of School

"Entering school is the first Rite of Passage children experience and it affects the way that they view themselves and the way the world views them," say child development psychologists David Bjorklund, Ph.D., and Barbara Bjorklund, Ph.D., from the Florida Atlantic University.

In an era when many children have already experienced separation from parents because of daycare, the firs day of school may be easier, "but there is not guarantee," the Bjorklunds point out. And for children going back to school after a summer vacation the reaction is mixed as well. Some children anticipate wit with great excitement, others dread it.

So what can parents do to make the back to school transition easier? ' For children going to school for the first time, contact the school and see if you can take a tour," suggests child psychologist Lawrence Balter, Ph.D., author of *Who's in Control? Dr. Balter's Guide to Discipline Without Combat.* Walking the route to school or traveling the bus route are also ways of familiarizing children with this new experience, he says.

For children returning to school after summer vacation, Dr. Balter recommends easing into the school routine for a few days before school starts if possible. "Get the bath and bedtime schedule into place and adjust the TV viewing so that children don't have so many routine changes all at once," Dr. Balter advises. Also, buy school supplies early and get your child's room ready for a new school year. "If parents show enthusiasm about the new school year, and include their children in the preparation, it will help them get excited about it and make it easier on parents those first few days," he concludes.

School Phobia

School phobia—an extreme anxiety about school--can pop up at any time during a child's 13 years of pre-college schooling. But school *refusal*—such as when a child is afraid to go to school because of a bully—is a much more global problem. "School refusal, if not addressed, can turn into school phobia," says child and adolescent psychologist Mark Goldstein, Ph.D. "Parents should not let children get away with staying home from school too often," he cautions.

School refusal is typically more of a problem with children in the younger grades but can happen at anytime. "When this appears in the upper grades, depression could also be the cause," says Dr. Goldstein. So how can parents tell if they have a problem on their hands? "If your child is refusing to go to school more than one day a week there is cause for concern," says Dr. Goldstein. Most importantly, get your child to go to school – whatever it takes. Letting this problem goon too long is not good. "The child will begin to think that this is okay and it could turn into a phobia," Dr. Goldstein warns.

How can parents prevent the refusals from getting to the phobia stage? Talking to your child about the reasons he or she doesn't want to go to school is the best way. "Some children don's know why they don't want to go to school. But it is important to try and talk to your child about the problem and share your childhood experiences, " Dr. Goldstein advises. In addition, teachers should also be educated about, and given strategies to deal with school refusal and school phobia. "Teachers need to deal with this problem without drawing more attention to the child and making it works," Dr. Goldstein concludes.

Homework

When the bell rings at the end of the day it doesn't signal the end of schoolwork. Homework is a topic that may incite crying spells or temper tantrums in some households.

"Parents need to really know their child to figure out the best strategy to get homework done," says child and adolescent development psychologist Dee Shepherd-Look, Ph.D., from California State University in Northridge. "The best time to do homework is when parents can be a "homework consultation" and oversee, not do, the assignment," Dr. Shepherd-Look continues. Distractions such as television and friends playing outside need to be at a minimum. "Some children aren't able to concentrate if they know their friends are outside playing kickball. Let your child play outside and set aside time after dinner for the assignments," she suggests.

Some children need rewards other than good grades to get homework finished. And basically, "a good reward is one which works, and one that the parents can live with," Dr. Shepherd-Look says. Again, knowing your child is the best way to determine what's going to get your child motivated. Using a point system that leads to special privileges such as a movie or a new computer game works for some children.

Other children need instant rewards like free time or a special snack.

Parents may need to monitor the homework schedule and reward system but they should never do their child's homework. "First and foremost, never do a child's homework. Parents can help by teaching children to help themselves," Dr. Shepherd-Look advises. Parents can do this by asking children questions which will help them get the right answer, not by giving them the answer. "Wait for your child to ask for help, then act as his or her personal consultant on the project," she concludes.

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Of Interest

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being

"AMERICA'S CHILDREN: Key National Indicators of Well-Being (July 1997)" was released today by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child & Family Statistics, a collaborative effort among 16 federal agencies, including the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The report presents 25 indicators of children's well-being, highlights of which are below. The full text (in a PDF format) and additional information are available at the National Center for Health Statistics web site: http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/about/otheract/children/child.htm

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From "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being"

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- Child poverty -- From 1990 to 1995, the percentage of children in poverty has remained virtually unchanged at 20% (it has been at 20% since 1981).
- Food security -- The food insecurity rate, the number of children that report that there is "not enough to eat," declined from 4% to 3% from 1990 to 1994.
- Housing problems -- From 1989 to 1993, the percentage of households with children in housing with any of three problems increased from 30% to 34% between 1978 & 1993.
- Secure parental employment -- Since 1970, the proportion of two-parent families in which both the mother & father worked all year full-time has increased from 13% in 1970 to 32% in 1995 (most of this increase occurred between 1970 & 1987).
- Health Insurance Coverage -- The percentage of children covered by health insurance has been fairly stable since 1987. The proportion of children covered by private health insurance has decreased in recent years, from 74% in 1987 to 66% in 1995; during the same period, the proportion of children covered by public health insurance has grown, from 19% to 26%. Hispanic children are less likely to have health insurance than either white or black children; in 1995, 73% of Hispanic children were covered by health insurance, compared to 87% of white children & 85% of black children.
- Health -- In 1994, 79% of all children were reported by their parents to be in very good or excellent health. Child health varies by family income: in 1994, about 88% of children in families with annual incomes of $35,000 or more were in very good or excellent health, as compared with 63% of children in families with annual incomes of less than $10,000.
- Prenatal care -- Preliminary data from 1995 indicate that 81% (rising from 76% in 1991) of pregnant women received early prenatal care in their first trimester, the highest ever recorded in the U.S. This improvement occurred among all racial & ethnic groups. However, there are still substantial racial & ethnic differences. In 1994, 83% of white women, 80% of Asian women, 69% of Hispanic women, 68% of black women, 65% of American Indian or Alaskan Native women received early prenatal care.
- Infant mortality -- The preliminary 1995 infant mortality rate for the U.S. was 7.5/1,000 live births,

slightly below the 1994 rate of 8.0/1,000 & substantially below the 1980 rate of 12.6/1,000 births. Infant mortality has dropped for both blacks & whites. However, there is still a substantial gap between the two. In 1995, the black infant mortality rate was 2.4 times higher than the white infant mortality rate, as compared with 1980 when the black rate was 2 times higher than the white rate. Infant mortality rates vary greatly across other racial & ethnic groups (and within these populations as well) from 6.6/1,000 births among Asian infants to 12.6/1,000 births among American Indian or Alaskan Natives

- Low birthweight -- The percentage of low birthweight infants has increased in the U.S. from 6.8% in 1980 to 7.3% in 1995. There is considerable difference between racial & ethnic groups (and within these populations as well). In 1994, 13.2% of black infants were low birthweight, as compared to between 6 & 7% of white, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, & Asian infants.
- Childhood immunization -- In 1995, 74% of children ages 19-35 months had received the combined series of vaccines consisting of 4 doses of DTP, 3 doses of polio, 1 dose of measles, 3 doses of Hib. (92% of children in this same age group have received at least 3 doses of Hib vaccine.) However, only 66% of children with family incomes below the poverty level received the combined series, compared to 77% of children at or above the poverty line.
- Activity limitation -- percentage of children & youth ages 5- 17 with any limitation in activity from chronic conditions (beyond 3 months), such as asthma, hearing impairment, or diabetes. Children & youth ages 5-17 have much higher rates of activity limitation than younger children: in 1993-94, 8% in this age group as compared to 3% of children from birth to age 4. Children & youth in low-income families have significantly higher rates of activity limitation: 12% of children in families with incomes below $20,000/year, as compared to 7% of children in families with incomes of $20,000/year or more. In 1993-94, 10% of boys & 7% of girls were limited in their activity.
- Child mortality -- In 1994, injuries accounted for 44% of all deaths of children 1-4 years old & 53% of deaths of children 5-14 years old. The 1994 mortality rate for children 1-4 was 42.9/100,000, one-third lower than 1980 rate; for children 5-14, the rate was 22.5/100,000, one-quarter lower than 1980 rate. Among both groups, black children had significantly higher rates, especially black children 1-4 years old: 77.2/100,000 & black children, 5-14 year olds: 34.8/100,000. Asian Americans had the lowest (1-4 year olds: 25.3/100,000; 5-14 year olds: 16.2/100,000.)
- Adolescent mortality -- In 1994, the death rate was 87.4/100,000 population, an increase since the 1985 rate of 80.4/100,000. Between 1985 & 1991, the death rate for black male adolescents rose dramatically from 125.3 to 231.6; in 1994 the death rate for the black male adolescent was 234.3/100,000, as compared to the white male adolescent rate for this same year, 109.6/100,000. Deaths from firearms increased threefold among black male adolescents between 1985 & 1991.
- Teen births -- In 1994, there were 37.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-17, totaling 195,169 births. There are substantial racial & ethnic disparities in birth rates among these teens. In 1994, the birth rate for this age group was 16/1,000 for Asian or Pacific Islanders, 23/1,000 for whites, 51/1,000 for American Indian or Alaskan Natives, 74/1,000 for Hispanics, & 76/1,000 for blacks. In 1994, 84% of these 1994 births came to unmarried mothers.
- Cigarette smoking -- The percentage of 8th, 10th, & 12th graders who reported that they smoked cigarettes daily increased between 1992 & 1996. In 1996, more than 22% of 12th graders reported smoking daily during the previous 30 days, as did 18% of 10th graders, & 10% of 8th graders. Prior to 1992, smoking had been decreasing among 12th graders since 1975 (no data available on other grades) when 27% of 12th graders reported that they smoked regularly. White students have highest rates of smoking.
- Alcohol use -- There has been a marked decline in 12th graders reporting regular drinking: in 1980, 50% of 12th graders reported regular drinking as compared to 31% of 12th graders (1 in 3) in 1995. While there are no 1980 data for other grades, 1995 data indicates that 20% of 10th graders (1 in 5), & 11% of 8th graders (1 in 10) reported regular drinking. Boys are only slightly more likely to drink in the 8th & 10th grades, but much more likely to drink in 12th.

- Substance abuse -- The percentage of students in each grade level reporting illicit drug use has increased substantially between 1992 & 1996: from 14% to 25% of 12th graders, from 11% to 23% of 10th graders, & from 7% to 15% of 8th graders. Prior to 1992, illicit drug use by 12th graders had fallen sharply from 30% in 1985 to 14% in 1992. Also, 24% of white 12th graders reported illicit drug use in 1995, as compared to 18% of black & 21% of Hispanics.
- Youth victims of violent crimes -- Youths age 12-17 are more likely than adults to be victims of violent crimes. In 1994, almost 2.6 million youth were victims of violent crimes, or 118 per 1,000 youths. While this rate has declined slightly since 1993 (123 per 1,000 youth), it has significantly increased from the 1980 rate of 79 per 1,000 youths. Black youth are generally more likely to be victims of violent crime. 1994 rates are 136/1,000 African American youth, as compared to 118/1,000 white youth. Boys are also more likely than girls to be victims of violent crime: rates of 141/1,000 & 95/1,000 respectively
- Difficulty speaking English -- While the percentage of children ages 5-17 who speak another language at home & who have difficulty speaking English has not changed significantly from 1989 to 1995 (5%), from 1979 to 1995, the number has almost doubled, from 1.25 million in 1979 to 2.44 million in 1995; underlying this increase is an increase in the percentage of children who spoke another language at home, from 9% in 1979, to 14% in 1995. Children of Hispanic & Asian origin are more likely than white or black children to have difficulty speaking English, since they are more likely to speak another language at home.
- Family reading -- From 1993 to 1996, the percentage of children ages 3-5 who are read to daily by a family member increased slightly, from 53% to 57%. Children were more likely to be read to, the higher the level of their mother's education or if they were living with 2 parents; white children are more likely to be read to every day than either black or Hispanic; children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read to every day than children from families with incomes above the poverty line (less than half of the children in poverty were read to every day in 1996, compared to 61% of children above the poverty line).
- Early childhood education -- The percentage of children ages 3-4 yet to enter kindergarten who are enrolled in nursery school increased from 36% in 1991 to 47% in 1995. This is a substantial increase since 1970, when only 15% attended nursery school.
- Math & reading proficiency -- Math scores increased slightly for all age groups tested between 1982 & 1994. Reading scores for 17 year olds increased slightly between 1980 & 1990, & have not changed significantly since then. Whites have consistently had higher reading & math scores than either blacks or Hispanics at ages 9, 13, & 17. On average, 13 & 17 year-olds whose parents have completed more years of school score higher than their peers whose parents have had fewer years of education. Girls have consistently higher reading scores than boys at all ages; in math, 9 year old girls & boys score similarly in math, but in later years, at 13 & 17 years, boys scored slightly higher than girls.
- High school completion -- Since 1980, the rate of youth completing high school has remained relatively stable at around 85%. However, for blacks, high school completion rates have increased substantially, from 75% in 1980 to 85% in 1995. They have increased less dramatically for whites, from 88% in 1980 to 90% in 1995. Hispanics have consistently had lower high school completion rates than blacks or whites.
- Detached youth -- percentage of youth ages 16-19 who are neither in school nor working. From 1990 to 1995, the overall proportion of detached youth has remained stable, at 10% in 1990 & 9% in 1996. Black & Hispanic youth are considerably more likely to be detached than white youth; in 1996, 14% of black youth & 16% of Hispanic youth, compared to 8% in white youth. The proportion of black youth who are detached has decreased from 18% in 1985, to 14% in 1996.
- Higher education -- The percentage of high school graduates ages 25-29 who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher has increased, from 27% in 1990 to 31% in 1996. This percentage in 1971 was 22%. White high school graduates ages 25 to 29 are more likely than either black or

Hispanic high school graduates in the same age group to have earned a bachelor's degree. In 1996, 34% of white, 17% of black & 16% of Hispanic graduates had earned a bachelors or higher.

- Child abuse & neglect -- In 1993, the rate of child abuse was 23.1 children per 1,000, under age 18. This translates into 1.6 million children as the victims of maltreatment, either abuse or neglect. Girls were sexually abused 3 times more often than boys; however, boys were at greater risk of serious injury than girls. Children of single parents were at much greater risk of abuse & neglect than were children living with both parents. Also, children from low-income families (below $15,000) were 22 times more likely to experience some form of maltreatment than children from higher income families (above $30,000)

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Of Interest

Census Bureau Releases Household & Family Characteristics

Three in Ten Households Were Maintained by Women in 1996

There were 29.2 million households maintained by women with no husband present in 1996, according to tabulations released today by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau. The report "Household and Family Characteristics: March 1996 (Update)," P20-495, provides 1996 data on the demographic characteristics of our nation's households and families by race and Hispanic origin.

Highlights include:

- Married couples with their own children under age 18 accounted for 25 percent of all households.
- The average number of people per household was 2.65.
- Thirty-two percent of all family groups with children were single-parent situations.
- People living alone made up 25 percent of all households.

These new tabulations are available on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>. A paper copy of the tables (PPL-66) may be obtained from the Census Bureau's Public Information Office.

Data are from the March 1996 Current Population Survey. As in all surveys, the data are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

The Census Bureau--pre-eminent collector and provider of timely, relevant, and quality data about the people and economy of the United States. In over 100 surveys annually and 20 censuses a decade, evolving from the first census in 1790, the Census Bureau provides official information about America's people, businesses, industries and institutions.

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Arlene Saluter
301-457-2452

Continue to the next article.

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

Parent Handbook: University of Illinois Child Development Laboratory

This 1997 booklet contains information for parents whose children are enrolled in the Child Development Laboratory (CDL), a university-based preschool and child care program operated by the Department of Human and Community Development on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The program provides half-day preschool for 2- to 4-year-old children and full-day child care programs for 3- and 4-year-old children. The mission of the CDL is to provide model programs for the local, state, and national early childhood communities; provide personnel training in child development and early childhood education; and facilitate research in child development and early childhood education. The booklet is organized into the following sections: (1) "Organization, Goals, Philosophy"; (2) "Daily Programs"; (3) "Delinquent Fees Policies" for both half-day preschool and full-day child care; (4) "Withdrawal Policy" for half-day preschool and full-day child care; (5) "Credit Reference Form"; (6) "Completion of Forms and Agreements"; (7) "Research, Field Trip, and Photographic Consent Forms"; (8) "Gradual Entry for Half-Day Preschool"; (9) "Home and School Visits for Half-Day Preschool"; (10) "Personal Belongings"; (11) "Insurance Coverage for Children"; (12) "Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures"; (13) "Emergency Medical Procedures"; (14) "Clothing"; (15) "Observation Booth Policy"; (16) "Illness"; (17) "Medication"; and (18) "Schedules."

Child Development Laboratory
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1105 W. Nevada St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Parents Speak about Child Care

The Wheelock College (MA) Family Child Care Project conducted 23 focus discussions on parents' child care experiences. Participants were groups of 8 to 12 parents in 9 U.S. cities. These groups were equal in their use of family child care (either in the provider's home or in child care centers and preschools). This 1997 document by Kathy Modigliani presents a thematic analysis of the videotapes resulting from the project. Part 1 of the document analyzes the parents' child care concerns, values, and attitudes. Part 2 analyzes what parents look for in child care. Part 3 interprets the meaning of the findings and their implications. Part 4 presents the caregivers' perspective and their relationship with the parents. Part 5 looks at the separate worlds of mothers and caregivers, the resulting interference in this partnership, and the cultural barriers that prevent the reform of the existing child care system. Among the findings are: arranging for child care is the mother's job; choosing and using a child care arrangement for the first time is very difficult; parents and caregivers live in two different worlds, which may prevent them from working together in the best interest of the child; and there is a need for parent education and consumer awareness around child care issues. Cost $10.

Kathy Modigliani
Family Child Care Project
Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
Boston, MA 02215

Families, Communities, Schools. Learning Together, Spring 1997.

The Families in Education Program of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has existed since 1987 to increase awareness of the need for schools to involve parents as true partners in the education of children. This 1997 parents' guide presents ways that parents and families of both younger children and high school students can become involved in their children's academic success. Articles from this issue have information on the following topics: what parents want from schools and ways to keep parents informed; action team leadership; creating joint ownership in the future (parents' role in making school budget decisions); a school enhancement team; how to assure healthy communities and healthy youth; family and community town suppers; volunteering; father participation in school learning; paired reading; ways to help with summer reading; and a description of how Wisconsin libraries make communities into learning places, which focuses on seven Wisconsin libraries. Also included are a parent interview form on best school practices; a community health checklist illustrating the need for a community to provide a healthy environment; 16 questions to encourage critical thinking in young readers; and a survey of parents on volunteering. (Bulletin No. 97268)

Ruth Anne Landsverk
Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison
125 South Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841

The Role of the Adult in the Life of the Child

This booklet was sent to the home of every Motorola employee in order to increase the awareness of the challenges facing adults as we address concerns about the growth and development of children in our society. It is designed to encourage adults to take a more active role in this process and improve the education system in America. It discusses, in brief, issues such as the pace of change in our society, the crisis in American education, education and parent goals, changing family structures, and possibilities.

Corporate Offices
Motorola Center
1303 E. Algonquin Rd.
Schaumburg, IL 60196
Telephone: 847-576-5000

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Goldberg, Sally. (1997). ***Parent Involvement Begins at Birth: Collaboration between Parents and Teachers of Children in the Early Years.*** **Allyn and Bacon/Simon and Schuster Education Group, 160 Gould St., Needham Heights, MA 02194-2315; telephone: 800-852-8024; Web site: http://www.abacon.com (Order No. H74156, $25.95, plus shipping).**

This book presents a parent involvement model built on a foundation of public school-based parent education seminars and home-based infant-toddler play-and-learn activities. The goal is to ensure that children begin their school experience ready to learn and become competent, confident learners. The book begins with a historical overview of parent involvement. Next, the parent involvement process is described, including parent education classes, a curriculum of developmentally appropriate learning activities for parents to use at home, and a developmental review at age 3 to identify areas that need strengthening and a follow-up review at age 5 to assess the progress made. In addition to presenting this model, the book offers a discussion of the guidance approach to discipline and managing child behavior, including the "fifteen pillars of parenting." It also provides a practical look at early literacy and a chapter on special needs, including Attention Deficit Disorders, the gifted, and the differently abled. The final section of the book contains the complete child-centered, activity-based program, which is a curriculum of activities designed to promote the development of cognitive, motor, socialization, language, and self-esteem skills; it includes key developmental milestones and 185 play activities with step-by-step instructions. Contains 64 references. PS025563

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2. Steinberg, Laurence; Levine, Ann. (1997). ***You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20.*** **Rev. Ed. HarperPerennial/HarperCollins Publishers, 1000 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, PA 18512-4621; telephone: 800-242-7737; fax: 800-822-4090 (U.S., $15; Canada, $21.50, plus shipping).**

A parent's relationship with a child will change when the child becomes an adolescent, but the relationship does not necessarily have to change for the worse. On the premise that knowing what to expect of this change is half the task of successfully parenting an adolescent, this book describes the "normal" developmental changes young people undergo as they enter and move through adolescence and suggests effective ways of relating to teenagers. Chapters in the first section of the book deal with family basics, such as what makes a good parent, family communication, and variants such as a working mothers and stepfamilies. The next section covers preteens, from ages 10 to 13, including physical health and development, psychological health and development, and the social world of the young adolescent, including school and parents' involvement in their adolescent's education. The third section covers these same areas for teens, from 14 to 17, including teen employment and preparation for college. The final section covers the transition to adulthood, from ages 18 to 20, including issues related to independence. Each section includes a list of related resources. PS025564

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3. Lee-Blickstead, Martha. (1996). *Enhancing the Family Support Component of a Family Day Care Agency.* Nova Southeastern University, Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education, 3301 College Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314-7796; telephone: 954-262-8700; fax: 954-262-3907.

A practicum at a nonprofit family day care agency in Canada serving over 4,000 children and their families was designed to assist in clarifying the meaning of family support and family-centered child care. The practicum was developed to assist the agency in moving towards operationalizing its commitment to provide optimal family support to families receiving its day care. Interviews with staff had confirmed that there was confusion regarding the definition and application of family support. The solution strategy included intensive work on a short-term basis with two agency staff groups. The development of a working knowledge of family support philosophy, principles, practices, and approaches was emphasized. There was also work to develop family support "champions" who were expected to provide leadership to their colleagues. A pretest-posttest evaluation showed that the practicum intervention effectively increased participants' understanding of specific family support concepts. The training appeared to build a foundation to support future strategies to enhance family-centered practice. A particularly significant outcome of the practicum was the development of a discussion paper, "Moving towards Family-Centered Day Care." (Six appendices present highlights of training sessions, the discussion paper on family-centered child care, best practices, a case study, evaluation forms, and feedback forms. Contains 40 references.) PS025558

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4. Osofsky, Joy D., Ed. (1997). *Children in a Violent Society.* Guilford Press, Maple Press Distribution Center, I-83 Industrial Park, P.O. Box 15100, York, PA 17405; telephone: 800-365-7008; fax: 212-966-6708; email: staff@guilford.com (U.S., $38.95; Canada, $41.95).

Today's children are bombarded with images of violence in cartoons, news reports, television shows, computer games, movies, and other media. In growing numbers, they are also exposed to real-life violence in their own homes and communities—as witnesses, victims, and increasingly, as perpetrators. Emphasizing the need for early intervention and prevention, this book examines the impact of violence exposure on children and youth, discusses several existing programs, and proposes new approaches to the problem. The first section of the book details the incidence, scope, and impact of the violence epidemic. This section's chapters are: (1) "Children and Youth Violence: An Overview of the Issue" (Osofsky); (2) "Exposure and Response to Community Violence among Children and Adolescents" (Jenkins and Bell); (3) "What Children Can Tell Us about Living in a War Zone" (Garbarino and Kostelny); (4) "Firearm Injuries Affecting U.S. Children and Adolescents" (Christoffel); (5) "Media Violence and Youth" (Murray); (6) "The Experience and Effects of Violence in Infancy" (Zeanah and Scheeringa); (7) "Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the 'Cycle of Violence'" (Perry); (8) "The Development of Violence and Crime as It Relates to Security of Attachment" (Fonagy and others). The second section of the book examines exemplary prevention and intervention programs currently in place in major cities. This section's chapters are: (9) "Interventions with Parents and Caregivers of Children Who Are Exposed to Violence" (Groves and Zuckerman); (10) "Experiencing Violence in a Developmental Context" (Marans and Adelman); (11) "The Trauma/Grief-Focused Group Psychotherapy Module of an Elementary School-Based Violence Prevention/Intervention Program" (Murphy and others); (12) "The Violence Intervention Project for Children and Families" (Osofsky); (13) "Perceptions of Violence: Children, Parents, and Police Officers" (Fick and others); (14) "Violent Cities, Violent Streets: Children Draw Their Neighborhoods" (Lewis and Osofsky); (15) "Cops and Kids: Issues for Community Policing" (Jenkins and others); and (16) "Prevention and Policy: Directions for the Future" (Osofsky). Each chapter contains references. PS025456

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Stepfamily Association of Illinois

The Stepfamily Association of Illinois, Inc. (SAI) is a nonprofit educational organization. It was founded in 1981 by a group of Chicago-area clinical and lay people who shared the conviction that local stepfamilies badly needed support. SAI aims to promote re/marital and stepfamily health by providing accurate, accessible, useful information about stepfamily realities.

Contact:

Stepfamily Association of Illinois
P.O. Box 3124
Oak Park, IL 60303
Telephone: 708-848-0909

Children's Rights Council

Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a national, nonprofit children's rights organization that advocates for the best interests of the child. CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy.

Contact:

Children's Rights Council
Suite 140
220 I (Eye) St., NE
Washington, DC 20002-4362
Telephone: 202-547-6227

Single Parents Association

The Single Parents Association (SPA) is a membership organization of single parents. SPA provides information on legal, medical, and insurance issues.

Contact:

Single Parents Association
4727 East Bell Rd.
Suite 45-209

Phoenix, AZ 85032
Telephone: 800-704-2102 (outside Arizona)
Telephone: 602-788-5511 (in Arizona)

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters

CompuKids

CompuKids is a bimonthly publication designed to assist children and their parents and teachers in getting the most out of using computers. The publication includes descriptions of available software, tips on hardware, and adaptations for Macintosh and IBM/Windows products. Regular features include: (1) "For Kids by KIDS," displaying children's computer products and stories; (2) "I Need Help!," which lists available software for particular activities, required computer configurations, the company publishing the software, and recommended ages. Included in this volume are articles on using computers in play, literacy/reading and computers, the Internet, keyboarding, word processing, creative writing software, stages of children's writing, summer activities, adaptive software programs to make accessing a computer easier for children, and innovative ways that computers can be used by children with disabilities. (6 bimonthly issues: U.S., $14.95; Canada, $26.95 in U.S. funds; other countries, $40).

CompuKids
5615 13th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55417

Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

These monthly newsletter issues, in English- and Spanish-language versions, explore different topics of early childhood behavior and parenting. Each issue also includes the regular features "Library Resources" and "Preschooler in the Kitchen." The topics for the 12 issues are as follows: January—"Kids and Computers"; February—"Teaching Children Civility...Treating Others with Care and Consideration"; March—"Physical Fitness for Preschoolers"; April—"Words to Love by: Communicating with Preschoolers"; May—"Social Skills: Learning to Play Together"; June—"Preschooler Memory: In One Ear and Out the Other?"; July—"Back to the Great Outdoors"; August—"Over the River and through the Woods to Grandmother's House We Go...But How Do We Get There?"; September—"Guiding Preschoolers to Behave Responsibly"; October—"There's a Concept behind That Apple"; November—"Observing: A Major Way of Knowing Your Child"; and December—"Promoting Young Children's Self-Esteem." (English Language Edition, one-year, $30; English/Spanish Language Education, one-year, $40; Countries other than U.S., Canada, Mexico, add $12 postage in U.S. funds).

Preschool Publications, Inc.
P.O. Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
Telephone: 800-726-1708 (international: 516-765-5450)
Fax: 516-765-4927

High/Scope Resource: A Magazine for Educators

Sponsored by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, the magazine is published three times yearly and provides a guide to the activities, products, and services of High/Scope. The Foundation's goals are to promote the learning and development of children worldwide from infancy through adolescence and to support parents and educators as they help children learn. The current issue includes articles on the importance of observation and feedback in the elementary setting, child-initiated learning in preschool, adolescent programs, and the adult's role in effective teaching.

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898
Telephone: 313-485-2000
Email: lynnt@highscope.org

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: The Children's Partnership

Description: The Children's Partnership is a national, nonpartisan organization that provides information about the needs of America's children and promotes ways to engage all Americans to the benefit of children. The site has two primary areas: (1) Resources, including *the Parent's Guide to the Information Superhighway*; and (2) Information, which features special topics and ways to get involved.

Address: http://www.childrenspartnership.org/

Name: Annie E. Casey Foundation (AEC)

Description: The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private, charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. Features of this site include: (1) Information on *Kids Count*, (2) Publications, (3) AEC Initiatives, and (4) News from AEC.

Address: http://www.aecf.org/

Name: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Description: The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is a private, nonprofit organization working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice. The Web site features: (1) the missing children database, (2) publications and resources, (3) other organizations that focus on child protection, and (4) a link to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Address: http://www.missingkids.org/

Name: AdoptioNetwork

Description: The AdoptioNetwork was established in the fall of 1994 to use the Internet as a way to improve the dissemination of information about adoption. The site offers information on: (1) federal programs that provide assistance for adoptions; (2) state adoption laws; (3) resources for adoptive parents, adoptees, and adoption professionals; and (4) a listing of adoption organizations.

Address: http://www.adoption.org/

Name: Iowa State University Extension's Child Development Publications

Description: This Web site contains resources on the following topics: (1) Infants, (2) Toddlers, (3) Preschoolers, (4) Parenting, and (5) Maternal and Child Health. In addition, users can access the *Children, Youth and Family Newsletter*.

Address: http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/ChiDev.html

Name: American Library Association: Resources for Parents & Kids

Description: The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest, largest, and most influential library association in the world. This page provides several resources for parents, including: (1*) The Librarians Guide to Cyberspace for Parents & Kids*, (2) the Parents Page: Library Connections for Parents, and (3) Links for Parents and Caregivers. Users can also link to the 50+ Great sites for Kids and Parents, as voted by librarians who work with children and the Web everyday.

Address: http://www.ala.org/parents/index.html

Name: Netparents.org

Description: Netparents.org was developed by an ad-hoc coalition of Internet businesses, nonprofit groups, and public interest advocates to help educate the public about the availability of user empowerment tools. The site provides: (1) Listings of Blocking Software, (2) Resources for Kid-Safe Net Access, (3) Descriptions of Content Rating Systems for the Net, (4) Listings of Kid-Safe Sites, and (5) Links to Additional Resources for Parents.

Address: http://www.netparents.org

Name: Voters Telecommunications Watch

Description: The Voters Telecommunications Watch is a grassroots advocacy group dedicated to educating the public about the online world. The Web site offers: (1) the pamphlet, *A Guide to Internet Parenting*; (2) Information on Parental Control Software; (3) Links to Other Organizations; and (4) Listings of Kid-Friendly Internet Resources.

Address: http://www.vtw.org/parents/

Parent News for August 1997

Resources for Parents

The Parenting Calendar

Conferences

Conference: Kinship Care: A Natural Bridge

Sponsor: Child Welfare League of America

Date: August 13-15, 1997

Place: Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, California

Contact:

Dana Wilson
440 First St., NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 2001
Telephone: 202-638-2952

Conference: National Inhalant Conference

Date: August 22-25, 1997

Place: Sheraton Music City, Nashville, Tennessee

Description: The National Inhalant Conference, co-sponsored by the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition and the Tennessee Department of Education, will bring together a diverse group of experts from around the country to discuss dealing with inhalant issues in your community and in addressing cultural factors related to inhalant use. The conference will also advance a national strategy for inhalant prevention.

Contact:

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition
Telephone: 800-269-4327
Email: nipc@io.com

Internet: http://www.inhalants.org

Conference: Creating the New Education: Inner Preparation for Montessori Teaching

Date: September 20-21, 1997

Place: Columbia, South Carolina

Description: The International Montessori Society's conference "Creating the New Education" will provide a psychological inner preparation for Montessori teaching—in-depth study and experience in applying Montessori principles with children.

Contact:

International Montessori Society
912 Thayer Ave. #207
Silver Spring, MD
Telephone: 800-301-3131
Email: havis@erols.com

Conference: Entering the 21st Century: The Opportunities, Choices, and Challenges

Date: October 1-4, 1997

Place: Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta, Georgia

Description: The 27th annual conference of the National Black Child Development Institute will bring together social service providers, educators, parents, and community church and business leaders who are working to improve the well-being of African-American children. This year more than 70 workshops and seminars on early care and education, elementary and secondary education, child welfare, research and health will explore issues, effective program models, practical experience, and applied research focused on solution to empowering our children.

Contact:

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 15th St., NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 800-556-2324 or 202-387-1281
Email: moreinfo@nbcdi.org

Conference: National Parents Day Coalition Conference

Date: October 22-26, 1997

Place: Washington, DC

Description: The National Parents Day Coalition Conference is held in conjunction with the Department of Education and the National Park Service.

Contact:

National Parents Day Coalition
Telephone: 202-530-0849

Conference: Strengthening Families—Building Communities

Date: October 23-26, 1997

Place: Arlington, DC

Description: The 11th national conference of the Children's Rights Council is called "Strengthening Families--Building Communities." Topics include trends in child custody and family law, parental access, mediation, family court, and parenting education.

Contact:

Children's Rights Council
220 I Street NE
Suite 140
Washington, DC 20002
202-547-6227

Conference: Adoption and Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Exposure: The Research, Policy and Practice Challenges

Date: October 24-25, 1997

Place: Alexandria, Virginia

Description: This two-day conference is designed for adoption professionals and other professionals with an interest in adoption. On the first day, leading researchers in the area of prenatal substance abuse will review key research and its implications. On the second day, leading practitioners and policymakers will explore the practice and policy challenges through plenary sessions and workshops on specialized topics.

Contact:

Kristina Nespeco
The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute

6 East 94th St.
New York, NY 10128
Telephone: 212-360-0280
Fax: 212-360-0283
Email: Knespeco@echonyc.com

Conference: 24th Annual National Middle School Association Conference

Date: October 30-November 2, 1997

Place: Indianapolis, Indiana

Description: The 24th Annual National Middle School Association Conference is called "Set the Pace for Middle Level Education." Participants can visit schools and action labs. Middle level education provides the foundation for much of the reform efforts taking place today and it is through this conference that these efforts can be designed and molded for future implementation.

Contact:

National Middle School Association
Annual Conference
2600 Corporate Exchange Dr.
Suite 370
Columbus, OH 43231
Telephone: 614-848-8211

Conference: Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth Conference

Date: October 30-Nov 1, 1997

Place: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Description: The first annual Healthy Communities--Healthy Youth Conference will be a nationwide networking and learning opportunity hosted by the Search Institute.

Contact:

The Search Institute
Telephone: 800-888-7828

Conference: 59th Annual Conference of the National Council on Family Relations

Date: November 7-10, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Crystal City, Virginia

Description: The theme of the 59th Annual Conference of the National Council on Family Relations is "Fatherhood and Motherhood in a Diverse and Changing World," which is intended to encourage discussion and debate on a broad range of topics related to parenthood.

Contact:

NCFR Annual Conference Registration
3989 Central Ave. NE
Suite 550
Minneapolis, MN 55421
Telephone: 612-781-9331
FAX: 612-781-9348
Email: ncfr3989@ncfr.com

Conference: National Association for the Education of Young Children

Date: November 12-15, 1997

Place: Anaheim, California

Description: The 1997 annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Contact:

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Telephone: 202-232-8777

Conference: Strengthening Families—Preserving Communities

Co-sponsors: Children's Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, and ARCH National Resource Center for Respite and Crisis Programs.

Date: November 17-21, 1997

Place: DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City, Virginia

Contact:

Phyllis Bolden
ARCH National Resource Center
800 Eastowne Dr.
Suite 105
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Telephone: 800-473-1727
Email: Pbolden@intrex.net

Conference: Eleventh Annual National Association for Family-Based Services (NAFBS) Empowering Families Conference

Date: November 19-22, 1997

Place: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Description: The annual Empowering Families conference, sponsored by NAFBS, promotes the exchange of family-based services, knowledge skills, and program ideas. All facets of the conference are offered to a multilevel audience and address cross-cultural and gender issues.

Contact:

DyAnn Goff
NAFBS
1513 Stoney Point Rd. NW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405
Telephone: 219-396-4829

Conference: International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs

Sponsor: Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood

Date: November 20-23, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

Contact:

DEC Conference
3 Church Circle
Suite 194
Annapolis, MD 21401
Telephone: 410-269-6801
Fax: 410-267-0332

Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for September 1997

Volume 3, Number 9

- What's New on NPIN
- September's Feature:
  Early Education for Children with Special Needs
  by Michaelene M. Ostrosky
- Community Spotlight:
  Foster Parenting: Reaching Out to Support Displaced Children
  by Anne S. Robertson
- Of Interest:
  - *Back-to-School Facts from the United States Census Bureau*
  - *College Affordability: Is There a Crisis?*
  - *Using Research to Develop School Programs*
  - *Temper Tantrums: What Causes Them and How Can You Respond?* by Dawn Ramsburg
  - *Children's Books*
  - *Announcements*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for September 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during August 1997

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following resources have been added:

- *Brain development research -- What it means for young children and families*
  Includes what we know about the developing brain and how that knowledge can and should inform efforts to improve results for children and their families
- *Time out for "time-out"*
  Lists what you should know before you give a child "time-out".

In the Children and the Media section, the following resources have been added:

- *Media Violence and young children*
  Lists the effects of watching too much TV violence on young children and how parents can help.

In the Early Childhood: Family/Peer Relationships section, the following resources have been added:

- *Time out for "time-out"*
  Lists what you should know before you give a child "time-out".

In the Early Childhood: Learning section, the following resources have been added:

- *Learning Now!*
  Provides families and caregivers with information on how to increase the brain development of young children. Sponsored by the Greater Battle Creek CEO Forum/Education's Task Force. Includes parenting tips and age appropriate information.
- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Caregivers*
  This booklet for caregivers of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Helping Your Child Learn at Home section, the following resources have been added:

- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Caregivers*
  This booklet for caregivers of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *Family Support and Father Involvement*
  Focuses on promoting father involvement in the emotional lives of their children.

In the Parents and Schools as Partners section, the following resources have been added:

- *Making parents partners in children's learning*
  Offers tips for caregivers, teachers and parents in how to relate to each other.

In the Teens (14-20) section, the following resources have been added:

- *Family Support and Working with Adolescents*
  Includes an explanation of Family Support and goals for the program.
- *Worried aobut your teens driving?*
  Introduces 4MY-TEEN and includes registration information.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Parent Involvement Begins at Birth: Collaboration between Parents and Teachers* by Sally Goldberg
- *You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20* by Laurence Steinberg and Ann Levine
- *Enhancing the Family Support Component of a Family Day Care Agency* by Martha Lee-Blickstead
- *Children in a Violent Society* by Joy D. Osofsky

Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Children's Rights Council
- Single Parents Association
- Stepfamily Association of Illinois

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *High/Scope Resource*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

September's Feature

Parents frequently wonder if their child is developing normally. While there are many resources available that show typical developmental "benchmarks" for young children, parents may struggle to find support if it appears that their child does not meet those benchmarks. Many communities now have early intervention specialists affiliated with the local school district or health facility who are able to assess a young child and recommend support services, if needed, for the parent and child. Frequently, this support is provided through homevisiting. Dr. Ostrosky, our guest author, is an Associate Professor in the Special Education Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Early Education for Children with Special Needs

by Dr. Michaelene M. Ostrosky

The field of Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), which includes services for young children with special needs from birth through age 5, is relatively new. As early as 1975, some states were providing services to preschoolers with disabilities; however, in many states, preschool services were not made available until Public Law 99-457 was passed in 1986. This law required that states provide a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities age 3 through age 5. Public Law 99-457 also included incentives (e.g., grant money) for states to serve infants and toddlers with special needs. This federal law provides a general definition of which children, birth to age 5, are eligible for EI/ECSE services. Each state is then responsible for creating more specific guidelines to determine eligibility as well as designation of diagnostic instruments or procedures to be used in identifying children and families who will be served. For example, states may include, at their discretion, "at-risk infants and toddlers" in their definition of "infant and toddler with a disability." Children are considered at-risk of having a delay if early intervention is not provided when certain risk factors, such as poverty, are present. In general, the increase in early intervention over the past 20 years has been a result of research documenting the importance of early supports for children with disabilities and for their families, the increased societal commitment to young children, and the federal legislation mandating early childhood preschool services.

Early intervention professionals work with children and families who have a wide range of strengths and needs. This diversity requires that professionals have a sound knowledge of child development, a broad understanding of various disabilities and risk conditions, and an array of strategies for gathering new information when it is needed. Additionally, given the interdisciplinary nature of early intervention services, professionals need skills in working on teams and in working with families as partners in the design and provision of EI/ECSE services. Finally, EI/ECSE services are provided in a variety of settings (e.g., preschools, homes, hospitals, child care centers), and professionals must be skilled in working within these settings. It is important to remember that young children typically spend the majority of their time outside of the "formal" intervention time (e.g., they spend more time with family members or others than they do in a preschool classroom or in a parent-child play group); opportunities for learning occur whenever children interact with the people and materials in these varied environments. Thus, individuals across settings need to be knowledgeable of, and skilled in, implementing the interventions that have been designed for young children. For example, if a preschooler is learning to use sign language at preschool, then his parents, siblings, extended family members, and other child care providers also should learn to respond to these signs and to communicate with this child using signs in conjunction with verbalizations.

Children usually first enter the early intervention system because parents have concerns about their child's development, or because a referral has been made by a physician, family friend, or professional (e.g., the child's preschool teacher). Typically, the young child is assessed to determine if EI/ECSE services are warranted.

Assessment refers to the process of gathering information. Several specific purposes exist for assessing children. These purposes include screening their developmental abilities (e.g., cognitive, communication, and motor skills) to identify children who need further evaluation, determining whether children are eligible for specialized services (e.g., speech therapy), making diagnoses, planning intervention programs, and monitoring children's progress. Nondiscriminatory procedures should be followed in the assessment of young children, including:

1. Assessment procedures should be administered in the native language of the parents or other mode of communication (e.g., signs, augmentative communication system) unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
2. Assessment and evaluation procedures and materials should not be racially or culturally discriminatory.
3. A single procedure should not be used as the sole criterion for determining a child's eligibility.
4. Qualified personnel should conduct assessments. Comprehensive assessments should include a combination of approaches for gathering information, including parent interviews, naturalistic observations, direct testing, and checklists.

Once a child is determined to be eligible for EI/ECSE services, the family and team of professionals design an intervention plan for the child. There is no single curriculum or intervention model that meets the needs of all children with special needs and their families, so an individualized approach to providing early intervention services is necessary. Goals that are important to the family and that will support the child's growth, development, and independent functioning are targeted and become the child's individual curriculum. Ongoing monitoring ensures that, if progress is not being made, changes in intervention programming can be implemented to facilitate development.

The early years are critical to a young child's physical, cognitive, social, communicative, and emotional development. Through the provision of EI/ECSE services, we can help young children with special needs develop to their fullest potential. Parents who have concerns about their children's development should call their local school district office to obtain the phone number for the EI/ECSE program in their community.

For more information on early intervention:

Internet Resources located at URL: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/clas/links.html

Robertson, Anne S. (1997, July). Homevisiting: Bridging the gap between a family and the community. *Parent News* [Online], *3*(7). Available: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/npin/pnews/pnew797/pnew797c.html [1997, September 3].

Sexton, David; Aldridge, Jerry; & Snyder, Patricia. (1994). Family-driven early intervention. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 22(2), 14-18.

Wright, Arlene, & Ireton, Harold. (1995). Child development days: A new approach to screening for early iIntervention. *Journal of Early Education, 19*(12), 253-63.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Community Spotlight

Foster Parenting: Reaching Out to Support Displaced Children

By Anne S. Robertson

Family foster care is designed to provide a supportive family environment for children who have been temporarily or permanently displaced from their biological family. Since the 1950s, foster care has been the preferred method of providing for needy children, replacing institutional types of alternatives such as orphanages. However, the current pool of foster families is shrinking (McKelvey & Stevens, 1994, p. 35), while the number of children in need of foster care is growing. According to records kept by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), 715,743 children needed out-of-home support during 1995. Information gathered by CWLA (Barbell, 1997, pp. 2-4) suggests that there are a number of reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of children in foster care. Those factors include:

- increases in the number of child abuse and neglect reports,
- increases in the rates of re-entry into foster care,
- increased amount of time that children spend in care,
- decreased support from other systems such as mental health and juvenile justice systems, and
- increasingly complex and changing needs that may be manifested through emotional/ behavioral problems, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS infection, and medically fragile or physical handicaps.

With the growth in the population of foster children, as well as the increased level of expertise required for support, most states work throughout the year to find and train good foster families.

One family that is meeting this need, one child at a time, are the Calhouns. The Calhouns have been foster parents since 1989 and currently reside at HOPE Meadows, part of the HOPE for Children project. HOPE Meadows is located at a former Air Force base. The circle of houses, now filled with foster parents, children, foster grandparents, and counselors, is part of Hope Meadows, an exciting example of the "whole village" approach put into action to support needy children. We recently talked with Debbie Calhoun about her experiences as a foster parent. Debbie and her husband have ten children including two biological children, five adopted children, and three foster children. In 1989, they began foster parenting because they wanted to help kids. Debbie had a friend who was a foster parent, and with her friend's encouragement, the Calhouns investigated the possibilities.

A first step towards foster parenting, in most states, is to participate in a series of classes sponsored by the state Department of Children and Family Services. In the state where the Calhouns reside, the coursework takes about 9 weeks and covers rules and regulations that are pertinent to foster parenting as well as general parenting tips and health issues. The instructors are experienced parents, called "Master Foster Parents," and they try to provide a true-to-life picture of the rewards and difficulties associated with foster parenting. Debbie indicates that while the classes are helpful, the real training comes from being "on the job" when the foster family gets its first child. The classes are part of a total package of information that the state requires before the family can obtain a foster care license. Other requirements include an interview, a satisfactory physical examination, a criminal check, and a homevisit. This screening process may take 6 months or longer, providing everything goes smoothly. In the end, foster families that complete the application process will have a lot of information about appropriate parenting, resources that are available for the children, and a Foster Parent Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, which helps to clarify the role of the foster parent in the life of the foster child. Foster parents are provided with a monthly stipend for each child who is placed in the home. The amount varies, depending on the needs of the child.

It is important to note that foster parents do have choices about the children who may be placed in their home. The foster parents may also opt to work closely with the child's biological family. Some families feel that they work best with infants or young children, while others prefer the teen years. Prospective foster parents are given information about the child's history and may ask questions about the child's background if they have concerns. In the end, it is the prospective foster parent's choice whether or not a child will be placed in the home. By including the foster parents in decision-making, many state agencies are working to keep foster families as active participants in their child's placement team. Also, some states are increasing the number of children in "kinship-care" or are placing the child with a relative caregiver such as the grandparent, aunt, or older sibling (Feldman, 1997, p. 3). While there are advantages to this approach, the Children's Research Institute of California has raised concerns that children may be placed in a relative's home without a thorough assessment, and that the relative caregiver may not be provided with the same support services that are available to nonrelative foster families.

However, Debbie says that despite the lengthy application process and other procedures, placements don't always work. In fact, after her first year as a foster parent, she almost gave up. The two siblings who had been placed in her family simply needed more than Debbie and her husband could provide. The placement team decided to move the children to a residential treatment home that provided more intensive structure and support. The next child that the Calhoun's fostered was a teen who needed a father and a family. This child did well and has since entered college on a scholarship. Seeing the success in their teenage foster son encouraged the Calhouns to take more foster children. Currently, the ages of their children range from 5 weeks to 22 years.

Other areas that concern those interested in foster parenting are the support and services that are available to the family. Debbie and other foster parents around the country concede that getting support through the state agencies can be difficult even though they may be entitled to this type of support. Agencies and social workers may be stretched in many different directions, and they depend on the foster parent to be the child's advocate in actively seeking the services the child may need. It is important that all families are connected to their community, but it is especially important for successful foster parenting. The Calhoun's have lived in the same area for years, and now that they are residing at HOPE Meadows, Debbie feels they are getting all the services they need and getting them quickly. Those services include tutoring for the children, counseling, and the support of involved neighbors. The HOPE Meadows community is much like any other community since it includes parents, children, seniors, and volunteers who plan regular activities and potlucks. Since the members of HOPE Meadows have chosen to live there and understand the goals of the community, they are dedicated to supporting each other and the children.

Family styles vary in foster families, but one quality that is apparent in "Master" foster families is their dedication. Because of the problems that the children may bring to the family, foster parenting is not a 9 to 5 job. Debbie feels that the most important quality is that the family will love and care for the child and be willing to sacrifice to provide the child with what is needed. This type of commitment may not be right for everyone, but people like the Calhouns feel that those daily rewards, seen in the little changes in the child, make the foster parent experience worthwhile.

For more information:

Contact your state Department of Children and Family Services, or your state Ombudsperson

Kinship Care Network
Edgewood Family Center
Telephone: 415-865-3000

HOPE for the Children and HOPE Meadows
Carolyn Costeel
Telephone: 217-893-4673

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for August 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

Back-to-School Facts from the United States Census Bureau

Each month the U.S. Census Bureau's Public Information Office releases various facts pertaining to selected events or topics occurring that month. The Bureau has compiled the following pieces of information about the millions of children who are returning to school in the next few weeks.

Nursery School

- About 4.4 million of the nation's children were enrolled in nursery school in October 1995. This translates to nearly one-half of the 3- and 4-year-olds in the United States (considerably higher than the one-tenth enrolled in 1968).

Kindergarten

- About 4 million children attended kindergarten in October 1995.

Elementary School

- About 32 million children were enrolled in elementary school (Grades 1-8) in October 1995—not significantly different from 1994, but nearly 5 million more than a decade earlier.

High School

- By 1995, about 15 million students were enrolled in high school, roughly 300,000 more than in 1994.
- One-third (33%) of 15- to 17-year-olds were enrolled below the appropriate grade level for their age in October 1995, up from 23% in 1980. Of enrolled 16-year-olds, 60% were in their junior year of high school, 27% were in their sophomore year, and 5% were freshmen. On the other hand, 7% were seniors. (Fewer than 1% were in their first year of college.)
- Many high school students held down a job during the school year: More than a quarter (26%) aged 15 and over were employed, and 3% worked full-time in October 1995.
- During the year beginning October 1994, 5% of all high school students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades dropped out of school.

College

- There were 14.7 million college students enrolled in October 1995. Just over 43% of persons aged 18 to 21 were enrolled in college in October 1995. Twenty-three percent of 22- to 24-year-olds were enrolled, 11% of 30- to 34-year-olds, and 2% of those aged 35 and over were enrolled.
- More than half of college students were women (54%). Women constituted an even larger share (58%) of students 25 and over.

- About 2.7 million persons attended graduate school.
- About 6 in 10 college students (62%) worked: 32% full-time and 30% part-time.

The Rewards of Heading Back-to-School

1995 Mean Money Earnings by Educational Attainment and Sex for Year-Round, Full-Time Workers Ages 18 and Over

	Both Sexes	Men	Women
Not a High School Graduate	$20,442	$22,454	$16,049
High School Graduates	$27,038	$31,063	$21,298
Some College, No Degree	$31,128	$36,546	$23,750
Associate Degree	$33,425	$37,628	$28,510
Bachelor's Degree	$44,523	$51,998	$33,665
Master's Degree	$55,384	$64,544	$41,676
Doctorate Degree	$72,099	$77,815	$55,041
Professional Degree	$98,179	$111,654	$59,793

A complete list of tabulations can be found at:

http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html

"School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1995."

http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education.html

"Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1996."

Source

Collins, LaVerne Vines. (1997, August 19). *Census back-to-school facts.* [Press Release]. [e-mail].

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

College Affordability: Is There a Crisis?

Not only are millions of children heading off to elementary, middle school, and high schools this fall, but millions are also starting or returning to college. A common concern for many parents with college-bound students is whether they will be able to afford college for their children. This concern usually is substantiated by the media as parents are urged to start saving for college as soon as their child is born (or even sooner)! In the recent Congressional budget debate, one of the key issues was assurance that tax relief was available for families with college-bound students. In fact, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich pointed out that one of the pieces of good news to come from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 is an "education package that contains approximately $40 billion of tax relief for families incurring higher education costs over five years" (Gingrich, 1997).

While this political debate was taking place, a report on college affordability was issued by the Sallie Mae Education Institute, which researches higher education issues. This report (1) reviews many of the issues surrounding rising college costs; (2) describes the circumstances from the viewpoints of parents, students, policymakers, and college administrators; and (3) looks at how different parties are trying to keep college affordable. It concludes by offering some approaches to reducing the negative effects of rising costs on students and families.

The key message from this report is while there are some indications that a "college affordability crisis" may exist for some, it is not a crisis for everyone or for all colleges. For example, it was found that four-year public college costs in 19 states are low relative to family incomes in those states or they have not grown faster than family incomes in recent years. In addition, the report finds that although college costs are rising, they are not rising as fast in the 1990s as they did in the 1980s. Finally, the report finds that student financial aid amounts awarded to four-year college students are growing and kept pace with costs and enrollment at four-year public colleges.

Despite these positive findings, it is interesting to note that while students were receiving more financial aid, nearly 97% of the growth in federal aid in this decade was in loans. This growth in borrowing suggests that it is becoming more difficult for students and families to pay for college from current incomes.

The findings also suggest that for lower-income families there is a college affordability crisis as families with lower socioeconomic backgrounds are increasingly underrepresented in four-year colleges and universities. However, the authors of this report are quick to point out that there are many other factors to consider when looking at the decline in college participation of lower-income families. These factors include: (1) lack of quality or quantity of academic preparation needed to be admitted, (2) lack of self-esteem regarding success in college and belief that the barriers outweigh any perceived benefits, (3) lack of support from family members, and (4) lack of transportation or options in proximity to the student.

The authors conclude by stating that while there is no single generalization about college affordability that fits all students, families, and colleges across the nation, it does appear that with the financial assistance that is available, the vast majority of students in the vast majority of places currently can and do find the financial means to attend a four-year college. The authors believe that by describing current circumstances as a crisis for everyone everywhere does a disservice to those who aspire to college as depictions of "soaring costs" dash the hopes of students and parents who already know paying for college will not be easy.

Sources

Davis, J. (1997). *College affordability: A closer look at the crisis.* Washington, DC: Sallie Mae Education Institute. (This report is free from Sallie Mae Education Institute, 1050 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Washington, DC 20007, 202-298-2540.)

Gingrich, N. (1997). *Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997: Fact sheet* [Online]. Available: http://speakernews.house.gov/family.htm [1997, September 2].

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

Using Research to Develop School Programs

New guidelines are being designed to help improve the quality of programs that have been developed under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The U.S. Department of Education will have "principles of effectiveness" available for review for applicants for 1998 funding. Grant recipients would need to show how their new programs would use:

- objective data on drug and violence problems in their communities and schools,
- research and evaluation of proven strategies that prevent or reduce drug use and disruptive or violent behavior,
- program design that has measurable goals and outcomes, and
- periodic evaluation that will allow for program refinement that will improve or strengthen the program.

The Department hopes that the new guidelines will encourage more effective use of grant resources that are available for program development.

Source

Lightfoot-Clark, Regina. (1997, July 18). ED wants hard results for drug-free schools funding. *Education Daily,* p. 4.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Anne S. Robertson

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

Temper Tantrums: What Causes Them and How Can You Respond?

by Dawn Ramsburg

Why Do Children Have Tantrums?

Temper tantrums can be frustrating and embarrassing for parents, especially when they occur in public places. Parents may find it helpful to remember that tantrums are often an expression of frustration for the children. Preschoolers, in their eagerness to control the world around them, may want to be more independent than their skills or safety allow (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). They may also have trouble expressing their feelings in words and therefore resort to a temper tantrum during which they act out their frustration and anger by crying, whining, shrieking, or pounding their hands, legs, and head on the floor. Temper tantrums can occur because a child is tired, hungry, or feeling helpless. Children may also throw tantrums to get an adult's attention, to get their own way, to hurt back if they feel hurt, or to get others to leave them alone (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 1993, pp. 305-307).

While it is not possible to prevent every tantrum, the frequency of tantrums may be decreased by making sure your child does not get overtired, overly anxious, or unnecessarily frustrated. Children who do not nap may be particularly prone to tantrums and often need a quiet period on a daily scheduled basis, when a parent or caregiver might lie down with him or read her a story. In addition, children whose parents are overly strict or who fail to set limits tend to have more frequent and severe tantrums (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). Thus, it is important to be firm about the limits that are set and respond similarly each time your child violates a rule. This strategy includes making sure that every adult who cares for the child observes the same rules and disciplines him or her in the same way.

How Can Parents and Caregivers Respond to Tantrums?

When your child has a temper tantrum, it's important to try to remain calm (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). Loud, angry outbursts may encourage your child to imitate your behavior. If you shout "Calm down," you will probably make the situation worse. It is often scary for children to lose control of their emotions, so it is important to stay in control (Samalin & Whitney, 1996). Seeing you lose your temper will only make it harder for your child to regain his, and will likely frighten him as well.

Strategies for dealing with temper tantrums

1. One way to deal with a tantrum is to ignore it (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 1993, pp. 305-307). Either stand quietly and wait until it's over, or exit the scene. This might mean leaving a mall or a checkout line and taking your child to your car to calm down. By removing yourself from the scene, the

tantrum will likely disappear, since many of your actions if you stay in place may only serve to prolong the tantrum. The general rule is: the more involved you are, the longer the tantrum will last (Brazelton, 1992, pp. 154-156). You might say when you return, "I'm sorry I can't help you more. I'm still here and I love you."

2. If you are not able to leave the child alone for safety reasons or because of your situation (e.g., on an airplane), gentle restraint or holding the child may comfort him (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). It is important to be calm and soothing with your child. However, you should not attempt to reason with your child at this point, as logical explanations are unlikely to be heard through the screams (Samalin & Whitney, 1996). You should also not change your "no" to a "yes" to get your child to be quiet. Letting your child have what she wants may solve the immediate problem, but if she learns that throwing a tantrum will help her get her way, she is bound to try it again.
3. If your child is physically out of control, move him to a place where he can thrash around without damaging anything or hurting himself, such as a rug or a bed (Brazelton, 1992, pp. 154-156). In most cases, however, he will stop before he loses control.
4. Depending on your child's age, try to use distraction (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). For toddlers, unless the child is overtired or extremely irritable, distracting her may end the tantrum. You might say, "Look at what the dog is doing," or "Let's see what's over here." It is important to remember not to laugh or make light of your child's behavior as you can humiliate and make the child feel ashamed of losing control of his emotions.
5. When you see a tantrum start, put it into words (Sears & Sears, 1995). A child who is "losing it" (or is about to) can calm down remarkably fast when she hears her exact feelings coming from your mouth. When this happens the tantrum ceases to be necessary. For example, your child wants something (a story, the toy someone else has, to go outside...) right now. As the tantrum kicks in, you calmly say, "It's hard to wait. You wish we could do it (or get it, or go) right now." Hearing feelings being put into words is the best way for children to learn how to put their feelings into words themselves, rather than exploding.

While occasional temper tantrums during the preschool years are normal, they should become less frequent and intense by the middle of the fourth year (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1993, pp. 502-504). However, it is not unusual for a child to have a temper tantrum when he or she is older, particularly if there have been unusual changes in the child's life or recent stress. Between tantrums, you might talk to your child about other ways to handle frustrations (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 1993, pp. 305-307). This includes teaching her how to tell you in words how she feels instead of using emotional displays. It is also important to note when the tantrums are occurring and attempt to avoid those situations that seem to precipitate them (e.g., grocery shopping). Or, if tantrums seems to occur at dinner or bath time, maybe you can try to create a new routine. Be sure, however, to involve your child in deciding on this routine, because the more you can involve your child in decisions that affect him, the less he will feel the need to use tantrums to have some input (Nelsen, Lott, & Glenn, 1993, pp. 305-307).

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

Children's Books

Below is a list of children's books that relate to the following topics: back-to-school, foster/adopted children and science/nature.

Back-To-School

Starting School by Janet Ahlberg (Published in 1990 by Puffin Books).

Going to My Nursery School by Susan Kuklin (Published in 1990 by Bradbury Press).

When You Go to Kindergarten by James Howe (Published in 1995 by Mulberry Books).

Moving Up from Kindergarten to First Grade by Chuck Solomon (Published in 1989 by Crown).

Spot Goes to School by Eric Hill (Published in 1994 by Puffin Books).

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman (Published in 1991 by Dial Books for Young Readers).

Annie, Bea and Chi Chi Dolores: A School Day Alphabet by Donna Maurer (Published in 1993 by Orchard Books).

It Happens to Everyone by Bernice Myers (Published in 1990 by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books).

Anabelle Swift, Kindergartner by Amy Schwartz (Published in 1988 by Orchard Books).

My First Day at School by Ronnie Sellers (Published in 1985 by Caedmon).

Edward Unready for School by Rosemary Wells (Published in 1995 by Dial Books for Young Readers).

Harry Gets Ready for School by Harriet Ziefert (Published in 1993 by Puffin Books).

Foster/Adopted Children

The Mulberry Bird by Anne Braff Brodzinsky (Published in 1996 by Perspective Press).

Two Birthdays for Beth by Gay Lynn Cronin (Published in 1995 by Perspective Press).

Let Me Explain by Jane T. Schnitter (Published in 1995 by Perspective Press).

Lucy's Feet by Stephanie Stein (Published in 1992 by Perspective Press).

Science/Nature

The Empty Lot by Dale H. Fife (Published in 1991 by Sierra Club/Little, Brown).

My First Nature Treasury by Lizann Flatt (Published in 1995 by Sierra Club Books for Children).

In the Snow: Who's Been Here? by Lindsay Barrett George (Published in 1995 by Greenwillow).

How Seeds Grow by Helene Jordan (Published in 1992 by HarperTrophy edition).

Nature Spy by Shelley Rotner (Published in 1992 by Macmillan).

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Of Interest

Announcements

On August 26, 1997, the Auburn University Extension Service and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies aired a satellite broadcast of "Principles of Parenting." The topic of this broadcast was "Raising Can-Do Kids: Getting Your Children Ready to Learn." Panelists discussed what parents can do to get young children ready to learn and what being ready to learn means.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of this broadcast, contact Byran Korth or Malinda Colwell at:

Telephone: 334-844-4151
Email: bkorth@humsci.auburn.edu

Past School-Age Child Care Satellite conferences are available for purchase from the Resource Center at Cornell University.

Currently available are:

Creating Positive Spaces for School-Age Child Care
This conference was held on September 26, 1996, and was designed to help find alternatives to make your school-age child care program's site more comfortable, safe, developmentally appropriate, and a fun place for kids.

Developmentally Appropriate Activities for School-Age Children
This conference was held on April 5, 1997. It was designed for people in early childhood settings, day care centers, family and group family programs, and school programs. The focus was to help you discover and use developmentally appropriate activities that school-age children in your program will find enjoyable, exciting, and fun.

Engaging Parents and the Community to Support Developmentally Appropriate Programming for School-Age Children
This conference was held on June 7, 1997. It was designed for people who care for school-age children in early childhood settings. This conference will help you build important connections with families, schools, and community agencies and organizations that are resources for you.

To purchase any of these conferences, contact:

Resource Center
Cornell University
7 Business and Technology Park

Ithaca, NY 14850
Telephone: 607-255-2080
Fax: 607-255-9946
Email: dist_center@cce.cornell.edu

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) reports that home accidents kill more children under age 10 than any disease and injure one in four children. To help reduce those risks, the AAFP has published a brochure that includes safety tips on cribs, toys, and bath time.

For a free copy of "Child Safety, Keeping Your Home Safe for Your Baby," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

AAFP
c/o Main Street Department Child Safety
PO Box 19326
Lenexa, KS 66285-9326

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for School-Family-Community Partnerships

A compact is a commitment to sharing responsibility for student learning and an action plan for a family-school-community partnership to help children get a high-quality education. All across America, parents, teachers, and community and business leaders are creating such compacts to build and strengthen partnerships for improved student learning. This handbook is designed to take a family-school compact team through the steps of building a compact. It provides information, strategies examples, and checklists to help parents, educators, and community members develop effective, workable compacts that can improve the school and increase student achievement. Following an introduction that describes the nature of the compact and outlines Title I legislation for high standards and student achievement, the handbook details the steps of the compact: (1) bringing the stakeholders together as a team; (2) creating the compact, including deciding the school's learning goals; (3) using the compact, including building support; (4) evaluating the results, including an example of a school profile and lessons for using evaluation data; and (5) strengthening the compact, including taking credit for what's been done right, and rethinking what needs to be done better. The handbook's concluding section discusses turning obstacles into opportunities. Worksheets for each of the five steps are included, and an appendix lists key resources. Forms from the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education are also included.

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
600 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173

Protecting Your Newborn

The Ford Motor Company in partnership with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has developed an informative video on car safety and young children. The video provides information about transporting the baby safely, proper use of car seats, and providing a safe home environment for a newborn. There are also suggestions for calming a fussy baby without jeopardizing the child's safety while traveling. The Ford Motor Company is dispersing the video through public institutions including local libraries. Please contact your nearest public library for more information.

Including Your Child

This booklet focuses on children who may have special needs and provides ways that a parent may support the child within the home environment and within the greater community. The first eight years are covered. Important concepts that are covered in the booklet include: families as the most important support that a child can have; every family and every child has strengths; help and support are important; your child may need special services; there are laws that can work for you and your child; you should have a dream for your child; develop a plan to make the dream come true; include your child in activities with all children in the community; and you are not alone. There are also a list of resources included.

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
Telephone: 800-424-1616

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

1. Brown, Lyn Mikel; Gilligan, Carol. (1992). ***Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development.*** **Harvard University Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138-1423; telephone: 800-448-2242; fax: 800-962-4983 ($19.95).**

Early adolescence is a crossroads in women's psychological development. A study explored girls' development and its implication for the psychology of women. From 1986-1990, nearly 100 girls between the ages of 7 and 18 at the Laurel School for Girls in Cleveland, Ohio, were interviewed. Most of the girls were from middle- or upper-middle-class families (80%), although some were scholarship students from working-class families (20%). About 14% of the girls were of color. In addition to traditional psychological research methods, a new method was implemented to help interpret the interviews. This book describes the study and discusses its implications in six chapters: (1) "A Journey of Discovery" provides an overview of the study and the discoveries that led to the development of a new research method; (2) "The Harmonics of Relationship" discusses the new method—a voice-sensitive method of working that allowed the researcher to follow girls' thoughts and feelings and to hear their struggle at adolescence; (3) "Whistle-Blowers in the Relational World: Three Guides through Childhood" presents a developmental narrative of 7- and 8-year-old girls speaking about themselves and their relationships and then focuses on individual girls; (4) "Approaching the Wall: Three Guides into Adolescence" discusses 10- and 11-year-old girls' attitudes and perceptions of relationships and then focuses on individual girls; (5) "Rivers into the Sea: Three Guides through Adolescence" discusses 12- and 13-year-old girls' changing perceptions and again focuses on individual girls; and (6) "Dancing at the Crossroads" discusses the study's implications for women's psychology and development, especially the relationship between women and girls. The book concludes with a notes section, a reference section containing 143 references, and an index. PS025672

2. Kersey, Katharine C. (1994). ***Don't Take It Out on Your Kids! A Parent's Guide to Positive Discipline.*** **(Rev. Ed.). Special Markets, The Berkley Publishing Group, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; telephone: 212-951-8891; fax: 212-951-8793; email: a-groff@putnam.com ($10).**

Effective discipline methods help children become considerate and responsible human beings. This book describes a way to discipline children without using force, fear, or punishment. Following an introduction, the book's seven chapters are: (1) "Learning How To Be Parents," which discusses difficulties of parenting and the lack of training available for parents; (2) "Bonding: The First Step," on the need for a nurturing relationship between parent and child; (3) "Honoring Our Children," discussing undesirable parenting behaviors, such as criticizing and being sarcastic, and desirable behaviors, such as careful listening and empathizing; (4) "Discipline Techniques That Don't Work," which discusses corporal punishment, humiliating a child, threatening, and other ineffective behaviors; (5) "Discipline Measures That Work," which discusses ignoring minor misbehavior, being firm, using positive reinforcement, and other effective behaviors, including strategies for controlling the child's environment; (6) "Understanding Your Child," which explores child development from infancy through adolescence; and (7) "Launching Your Child:

From Theory to Practice," on common problems and situations, such as biting, tattling, potty training, and whining. The book concludes with six appendices: (1) "Ideas for Incentives To Be Used at Home"; (2) "What To Say (or Do) When Parents Abuse Their Children in Public;" (3) "What To Do in the Grocery Store To Help Children Behave . . . Without Spanking Hitting, or Yelling"; (4) "Ideas for Family Behavior Charts"; (5) "How To Build a Child's Self-Esteem"; and (6) "Positive Ways To Encourage Children's Growth." PS025621

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3. Mulligan, Vicki. (1996). ***Children's Play: An Introduction for Care Providers.*** **Addison Wesley Longman Publishers, P.O. Box 580, 26 Prince Andrew Place, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3C 2T8; telephone: 800-387-8028 ($31.95 Canadian dollars). Also available from Addison-Wesley Longman U.S., 1 Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867-3999 ($23.95; no shipping charge on pre-paid orders).**

Intended as an aid for students on their way to becoming professional teachers and caregivers, this book encourages the student to contemplate his or her own ideas regarding play, including the concept of play and specific memories of play in their own past, and then use these thoughts to reshape the student's ideas about play. This book deals with the adult-child relationship, ethical decision making, attitudes towards play, developmental psychology and child care practice, and play in the child care context. The book also deals with more specific topics like inclusion and HIV and safety in the community. Throughout the book, alternative methods are suggested and examples of encouraging play for each age group are highlighted. The book's chapters are: (1) "Introduction to Play," including play in the child care context; (2) "Theoretical Perspectives on Play"; (3) "Supporting Play in Inclusive Programs"; (4) "Locally Appropriate Programs"; (5) "Supporting the Play of Infants and Toddlers"; (6) "Supporting the Play of Preschoolers"; (7) "Supporting the Play of School-Age Children"; and (8) "The Role of Adults in Supporting Children's Play." Each chapter ends with a summary, several situations to investigate, ideas to extend the student's learning, and an introspective list of thoughts and moral questions to consider. Contains 93 references. PS025537

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4. Wormser, Richard. (1996). ***American Childhoods: Three Centuries of Youth at Risk.*** **Walker and Company, 435 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014 ($16.95).**

In our concern over the impact of AIDS, gang wars, and family breakdown on children today, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that previous generations of American children also faced great adversity. This study of childhood through the centuries provides a new perspective on the age-old challenge of growing up and thriving in a diverse and complex society. The book consists of a brief introduction followed by eight chapters. Chapter 1, "Crime and Punishment," details crime and punishment of children from the eighteenth century to the present. Chapter 2, "Dying Young," discusses the shocking rate of child mortality in earlier centuries and the reasons for it, and compares that to the current situation. Chapter 3, "Warrior Children," discusses the historical participation of children in wars and military service in this country. Chapter 4, "Sex and Romance," discusses the gradual relaxation of attitudes about, and the increase in, teenage sexual behavior. Chapter 5, "Working Days," details the history of child labor in the United States. Chapter 6, "Hate Thy Neighbor," describes bigotry among children in the United States over the last two centuries. Chapter 7, "The Struggle to Learn," outlines the history of public education in the United States. Chapter 8, "The Rise and Decline of the Family," provides a historical view of the changing American family. (Includes a 50-item bibliography, subdivided by chapters, and an index.) PS025645

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5. Acredolo, Linda: Goodwyn, Susan. (1996). ***Baby Signs: How to Talk with Your Baby before Your Baby Can Talk.*** **Contemporary Books, Two Prudential Plaza, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601-6790 ($12.95).**

Based on research in infant sign language, this book teaches parents methods of communicating with their infants through the use of simple bodily movements that signify objects, events, and needs. Noting that communication between parent and child can flourish between 9 months and 30 months, when a baby's desire to communicate outstrips the ability to say words, this guide explains how increasing the number of gestures in a baby's repertoire can expand and improve parent-child communication. Increasing the number of gestures a baby uses also stimulates the process of learning to talk, encourages intellectual development, enhances self-esteem, and strengthens the parent-infant bond. The guide provides step-by-step instructions with photographs and diagrams, and includes sections on baby signs as part of the language puzzle, signs to start with, charting progress, developing new signs, differences among babies, real-life baby sign stories, signing and rhyming, from signs to speech, and parents questions. PS024666

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

National Adoption Center

The purpose of the National Adoption Center (NAC) is to help children waiting to be adopted be matched with families who want to adopt them. NAC is not an adoption agency, but it works closely with adoption agencies across the country, providing information and referrals. NAC offers a "home study" kit for families considering adoption and offers information about adopting children with special needs and those from minority cultures.

Contact:

National Adoption Center
1500 Walnut St.
Suite 701
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Telephone: 215-735-9988
Toll Free: 800-TO-ADOPT

Sibling Information Network

The Sibling Information Network was established for families with disabled members. Founded in 1981, the organization publishes a newsletter that contains articles and research reports written by authorities on how family members can be supportive of each other. A second newsletter, *SIBPAGE*, is published for children from age 5 to 15, and contains games, information on pen pals, and articles about how to cope with their siblings disability.

Contact:

The Sibling Information Network
University of Connecticut
A.J. Pappanikou Center
249 Glenbrook Rd.
Storrs, CT 06269-2064

The National Foster Parent Association

The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) is a nonprofit organization established in 1972 to bring together foster parents, agency representatives, and community people who wish to work together to improve the foster care system and enhance the lives of all children and families.

Contact:

National Foster Parent Association, Inc.
9 Dartmoor Dr.
Crystal Lake, IL 60014-8603
Telephone/Fax: 815-455-2527

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters

Right Track: Erudite Technology Group's Newsletter

The mission of the Erudite Technology Group is to educate, train, and ensure the ever-growing excellence of those institutions that perform the educational function. The goals of the newsletter include providing information, direction, and solutions to the community about educating children and inspiring adults within the community to make contributions through volunteer efforts.

Email: info@eruditus.org

UPDATE

Published by the National Center for Family Literacy, this bimonthly newsletter discusses activities at the Center as well as other information as it relates to family literacy. A recent issue includes information on community involvement, projects in family literacy, and grant information, as well as a calendar of events.

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 W. Main St.
Louisville, KY 40202-4251

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: I Am Your Child

Description: I Am Your Child is a national public awareness and engagement campaign to make early childhood development a top priority for our nation. New research indicates that the first three years of a child's life are significant years for emotional and intellectual growth. The Web site includes articles on brain research, advice and information from experts in the field of early childhood development, resource information, and a calendar of events for the campaign.

Address: http://iamyourchild.org/start.html

Name: Expect the Best from a Girl: That's What You'll Get

Description: Sponsored by Mount Holyoke College, this Web site features articles with information parents can use to encourage girls to excel in math, science, and technology (traditionally male fields). It also includes lists of programs designed specifically for girls, colleges and universities with programs targeted at female students, and contact information for other resources (e.g., youth organizations, media organizations).

Address: http://www.academic.org/

Name: The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect

Description: The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, maintained by the U.S. Public Health Service, is a national resource for professionals seeking information on the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The site includes full-text articles and fact sheets on child abuse and neglect, a catalog of low-cost or free publications and materials, abstracts of research reports on child abuse, statistics on the incidence of child abuse, and many other pertinent articles.

Address: http://www.calib.com/nccanch/

Name: Better Homes and Gardens Guide to Parenting

Description: *Better Homes and Gardens* has compiled 10 years' worth of parenting articles written by John Rosemond arranged alphabetically on this site. All the articles have previously appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens.*

Address: http://www.bhglive.com/scgi/guide/UserGuide.cgi

Name: Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Description: Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a national nonprofit organization with more than 400 chapters throughout the United States. This Web site includes articles and statistical information about drunk driving in addition to contact information for local chapters, information on a victim hotline sponsored by MADD, and conference and workshop announcements. Many brochures and pamphlets published by MADD are available online or can be ordered from MADD at low cost.

Address: http://www.madd.org/

Name: The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind

Description: The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. This clearinghouse is a federally funded information and referral service that identifies, coordinates, and disseminates (at no cost) information related to children and youth who are deaf-blind (ages 0 to 21 years). Four organizations (American Association of the Deaf-Blind, Helen Keller National Center, Perkins School for the Blind, and Teaching Research) work together to provide the information available through the clearinghouse.

Address: http://www.tr.wosc.osshe.edu/dblink/index.htm

Name: Autism Society of America

Description: The Autism Society of America has been in existence since 1965. Autism is the third most common developmental disability. The Web site features articles that describe autism, the education of children with autism, early intervention for children with autism, contact information for local chapters of the society, and information about federal regulations affecting the education of children with autism.

Address: http://www.autism-society.org/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for September 1997

Resources for Parents

The Parenting Calendar

Conferences

Conference: How to Grow a Healthy Child

Date: October 7, 1997

Place: Penn State Conference Center Hotel, State College, Pennsylvania

Description: "How to Grow a Healthy Child" is an interdisciplinary conference that will highlight the developmentally appropriate and unique nutritional needs of children in order to support normal growth and development. Participants can learn about the current nutritional status of today's child and the environmental and sociological factors that influence children's eating behavior. In addition, Pennsylvania's child nutrition and health experts will provide practical strategies that health professionals and child care providers can use. This conference is co-sponsored by the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc.; the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council MidEast; and the Dairy Council, Inc., a continuing and distance education service of the College of Health and Human Development, Department of Nutrition and School of Nursing.

Contact:

About Program Content

Robin S. Bagby
College of Health and Human Development
The Pennsylvania State University
201 Henderson Building
University Park, PA 16802-6501
Telephone: 814-863-7252
Fax: 814-865-3282
Email: rsb7@psu.edu

About Registration

Suzanne St. Pierre
The Pennsylvania State University
225 Penn State Conference Center Hotel

University Park, PA 16802-7002
Telephone: 814-863-5140
Fax: 814-863-5190
Email: ConferenceInfo1@cde.psu.edu

Conference: White House Conference on Child Care

Date: October 23, 1997

Place: White House

Description: The White House Conference on Child Care will examine the strengths and weaknesses of child care in America and explore how our nation can better respond to the needs of working families for affordable, high-quality child care.

Conference: "Every Child is Special" by the Colorado Alliance for Quality—School-Age Programs

Date: November 8, 1997

Place: Denver, Colorado

Description: The Colorado Alliance for Quality—School-Age Programs presents the 7th annual CAQSAP School-Age Fall conference.

Contact:

Deb Kulcsar
Telephone: 303-499-1125 ext. 224

Sandy Minster
Telephone: 303-233-8877

Conference: International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs

Date: November 20-23, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

Description: The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children presents the 13th annual conference. This conference will address research, policy, personnel training, program planning, and service delivery issues related to young children with special needs and their families. This year's theme is "Crossing Boundaries: Linking Practice and Research."

Contact:

DEC Conference
3 Church Circle, Suite 194
Annapolis, MD 21401
Telephone: 410-269-6801
Fax: 410- 267-0332

Return to the Parent News for September 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN

National Parent Information Network

Parent News for October 1997

Volume 3, Number 10

- What's New on NPIN
- October's Feature:
  Study Reveals that Parents' Unequal Treatment of Children May Not be Harmful
  by Amanda Kowal
- Community Spotlight:
  Parent Information Centers--A Resource for Parents
  by Dawn Ramsburg
- Of Interest:
  - *Adoption: A Myriad of Options*
  - *The Importance of the Parent-Teacher Conference*
  - *Districts in California Open Single-Sex Academies*
  - *New Study on Toilet Training*
  - *Reducing the Risk of Failure by Easing Transitions and Providing Connections*
  - *Children's Books*
  - *Mentorship Online*
  - *Charter Schools Progress Report*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for October 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during September 1997

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following resources have been added:

- *When babies and toddlers are in child care, accreditation is a key to quality*
  Includes statistics about very young children involved in non-parental care and gives information about NAEYC's national accreditation process
- *Where your child care dollars go*
  Informs and offers solutions to the inadequate staff compensation, low program quality, and negative outcomes for children for many child care centers.

In the Early Childhood: Learning section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *Learning Now!*
  Provides families and caregivers with information on how to increase the brain development of young children. Sponsored by the Greater Battle Creek CEO Forum/Education's Task Force. Includes parenting tips and age appropriate information.
- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Caregivers*
  This booklet for caregivers of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Helping Your Child Learn at Home section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *READY*SET*READ Early Childhood Learning Kit for Caregivers*
  This booklet for caregivers of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *Teaching young children to resist bias*
  Lists what parents and teachers can do to help children resist bias.
- *"I am your child" -- Early childhood public engagement campaign*
  Includes the goals of the campaign, national media events, and national, state and community action.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* by Lyn Mikel Brown
- *Don't Take It Out on Your Kids! A Parent's Guide to Positive Discipline* by Katherine C. Kersey
- *Children's Play: An Introduction for Care Providers* by Vicki Mulligan
- *American Childhoods: Three Centuries of Youth at Risk* by Richard Wormser
- *Baby Signs: How to Talk with Your Baby before Your Baby Can Talk* by Linda Acredolo

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Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- National Adoption Center
- Sibling Information Network
- The National Foster Parent Association

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Right Track: Erudite Technology Group's Newsletter*
- *UPDATE*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

October's Feature

Study Reveals that Parents' Unequal Treatment of Children May Not Be Harmful

by Amanda Kowal

Most parents try very hard to treat their children fairly and equally. But often children are different ages or have different personalities or needs, so it is not possible—or even practical—to treat them the same. One result of treating children differently is that parents are often discouraged to hear their children complain, "It's not fair!"

A recent study we conducted at the University of Illinois has revealed, however, that children generally do understand why their parents treat them differently, and they think it's okay, even if they don't enjoy it at the time. One child in this study claimed, " [my mom] punishes me more and stuff, but that's just because she loves me. It's not because she loves my sister more. If she didn't care, then she wouldn't punish me." When we asked whether he felt that way when he was being punished, the child laughed and said, "Not usually." The results of this study revealed that children generally do see their parents as doing a pretty good job of treating them equally, and that when differential treatment does occur, they usually think it's fair. We also found that when children understand that differential treatment occurs in the service of meeting one child's particular needs, they tend to have better sibling relationships.

In this study, trained researchers went to the homes of 61 families and talked to children between the ages of 11 and 13, and their siblings who were 1.5 to 4 years older or younger. We first interviewed children about the extent to which equal and differential treatment occurred in their families in the realms of parental control and affection. Then we asked children about why they thought their parents treated them differently from their siblings. For example, children were asked why they thought their parents were stricter with, more sensitive to, or favored one child over the other. Children also told us whether or not they felt that the differential treatment was fair. Finally, the children filled out questionnaires about the quality of their sibling relationship.

The results of this study revealed that children felt that differential treatment was unfair in only one-fourth of the instances they responded about. Further, although children were able to use relatively sophisticated rationales to understand why their parents treated them differently, they reported that differential treatment occurred in only one-third of the cases.

Children gave a variety of reasons to explain why they thought their parents treated them differently. These reasons generally fell into five main categories:

- Different Needs—"My mom praises my brother more because he has such low self-esteem he needs a lot of praise."
- Different Ages—"My dad punishes my brother more because he is older and should know better."

- Personal Attributes—"My mom listens to my sister more because she is a much more talkative person than I am."
- Shared Interests—"My mom spends more time with me because we both like tennis so much. My brother and dad do more things together like play catch."
- Sibling Drives Differential Treatment—"My brother doesn't want affection from my mom, he goes 'Ewww yuck' when she tries to hug him."

One of the most important findings of this study was that if children perceived that their parents treated them differently because of their siblings' different needs, the children tended to get along better with each other. This was the case even if children reported that a significant amount of differential treatment occurred in their home. This finding is important because most parenting handbooks advise parents to avoid treating their children differently in order to avoid sibling conflict and jealousy. The results of this study suggest, however, that an even more important consideration for parents is that they can communicate with their children about the reasons behind differential treatment. Children's sibling relationships may not be adversely affected by differential treatment if the children believe that these behaviors occur to benefit themselves or their siblings. As one child said, "Sometimes you should treat kids equally, but sometimes that can cause troubles because you should be treating them differently. It all depends on what the kids need."

For more information, refer to:

Kowal, Amanda, & Kramer, Laurie. (1997). Children's understanding of parental differential treatment. *Child Development, 68*(1), 113-126.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Community Spotlight

Parent Information Centers—A Resource for Parents

by Dawn Ramsburg

Did you know that there are 40 local parent information and resource centers in communities across the nation (called **Parent Education Resource Centers**), and did you know that every state has a parent training and information center set up to support parents of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities (called **Parent Training and Information Centers**)? While the names may sound similar, each program is separate, funded under different agencies within the Department of Education. Yet, between these two sets of programs, every state has some form of resource center for parents with children with disabilities seeking information, and almost every state has a resource center that serves ALL the parents in that state. The purpose of this article is to provide background information on these programs and to provide you with contact information for the centers.

Parent Education Resource Centers

On August 6, 1997, Secretary of Education Richard Riley announced that 12 states would receive nearly $5 million to set up local parent information and resource centers in communities across the nation (which will begin October 1, 1997). In addition, he announced that the Department would continue funding the 28 existing centers that are in their third year of operation, bringing the total number of parent information resource centers to 40.

The Parent Education Resource Centers are authorized under Title IV of the*Goals 2000 Educate America Act*. The purpose of these centers is to provide training, information, and support to parents of children from birth through secondary school. Nonprofit organizations collaborating with schools, universities, social service agencies, and other nonprofits were eligible to apply for the grants. The average grant awarded was about $400,000 a year, and the grants last for four years.

The three objectives of the centers are to:

- increase parents' knowledge of and confidence in effective child-rearing activities;
- strengthen partnerships between parents and school professionals to help meet the educational needs of preschool children (starting from birth) and school-aged children; and
- strengthen the development of children who participate in the program.

The centers will identify and serve families and schools in communities with a high proportion of minority, low-income, and limited English proficient parents. Programs and resources will be accessible to any parent within the state or region that the center serves.

Some of the services provided by various programs around the country include:

- parent-to-parent training activities;
- "hotlines" that respond to parents' concerns about child development and behavior; and
- workshops to help parents enhance their parenting skills, foster their child's school readiness, understand their child's academic development, and use resources to improve their child's learning.

In addition, centers will also provide resources and guidance developed under the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), both of which are considered effective in helping parents prepare their children for school success.

Spotlight on One Parent Education Resource Center: The Illinois Family Education Center

To illustrate how a Parent Education Resource Center plans to accomplish these aims, we contacted the Illinois Family Education Center (one of the recently funded Parent Education Resource Centers).

According to Sam Redding (personal communication, September 25, 1997), the Illinois Family Education Center will:

1) disseminate information to parents statewide through newsletters, conferences, and an Internet site;

2) operate four demonstration sites (called Parent Centers) in the state:

- two in Chicago, which will be based in the schools and will use the HIPPY program
- two in rural communities (Oregon, IL, and Lincoln, IL), which will be based in the district and will use the PAT programs; and

3) establish a leadership institute that will help train parent leaders to establish their own programs in their communities.

Right now, the Illinois Family Education Center is currently focused on getting the staff in place so that it can begin operation October 1, 1997 (when the program officially begins). The center will eventually add at least one other community agency as a collaborating partner for the schools. Finally, although the four demonstration projects will serve primarily low-income and rural families, it is the intent of the program to serve all families in Illinois through its dissemination activities.

For more information on this program, contact Sam Redding at the Illinois Family Education Center, 217-732-6462.

To see what some of the previously funded programs offer, visit any of the programs with a Web site listed below.

List of the 40 State Parent Education Resource Centers

States without a Parent Education Resource Center: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Alabama
Special Education Action Committee, Inc.
Mobile, AL
Carol Blade

334-478-1208

Arkansas
Jones Center for Families
Springdale, AR
Nicholas Long
501-320-4605

California
Ahmium Education, Inc.
San Jacinto, CA

Colorado
Clayton Foundation
Denver, CO

District of Columbia
Greater Washington Urban League
Washington, DC

Florida
Center for Excellence
Tampa, FL

Georgia
Albany/Dougherty 2000 Partnership
Albany, GA

Hawaii
Parents & Children Together
Honolulu, HI

Illinois
Building Parent Learning Communities
Lincoln, IL
Sam Redding
217-732-6462

Indiana
The Indiana Parent Information Network, Inc.
Indianapolis, IN
Donna Olson
317-257-8683

Iowa
The Higher Plain
Iowa City, IA

Kentucky
Licking Valley Community Action Program

Flemingsburg, KY

Louisiana
Louisiana Family Assistance Network
Baton Rouge, LA
Mary McClure
504-926-3820

Maine
Maine Parent Federation
Augusta, ME

Maryland
Child Care Connection, Inc.
Rockville, MD

Massachusetts
Cambridge Partnership for Public Education
Cambridge, MA

Michigan
Life Services System of Ottawa County, Inc.
Holland, MI

Minnesota
PACER Center, Inc.
Minneapolis, MN

Mississippi
Mississippi Forum on Children and Families
Jackson, MS
Jane P. Boykin
601-355-4911

Missouri
Literacy Investment for Tomorrow-Missouri
St. Louis, MO

Nebraska
Blue Valley Community Action, Inc.
Jane Schafer
402-471-3700

Nevada
Sunrise Children's Hospital Foundation
Las Vegas, NV

New Hampshire
Parent Information Center
Concord, NH

New Jersey
Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey
Newark, NJ

New York
Geneseo Migrant Center, Inc.
Geneseo, NY

North Carolina
Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
Davidson, NC

North Dakota
North Dakota Pass Network
Minot, ND
Kathryn Erickson
701-852-9426

Ohio
Lighthouse Youth Services, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH

Oklahoma
Eagle Ridge Institute
Oklahoma City, OK

Oregon
Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center
Portland, OR
Lisa Guy
503-282-1975

Pennsylvania
Community Action Southwest
Washington, PA

Rhode Island
Rhode Island Parent Information Network, Inc.
Pawtucket, RI
Deanna Forist
401-727-4144

South Carolina
Alliance for South Carolina's Children
Columbia, SC
John S. Niblock
803-343-5510

South Dakota

Black Hills Special Services Foundation
Sturgis, SD

Tennessee
NashvilleREAD, Inc.
Nashville, TN

Texas
Mental Health Association of Texas
Austin, TX

Vermont
Addison County Parent Child Center
Middlebury, VT

Washington
Children's Home Society of Washington
Tacoma, WA

Wisconsin
United Health Group of Wisconsin
Appleton, WI

Guam
Sanctuary, Inc.
Stephanie Smith
671-735-1400

Parent Training and Information Centers

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal special education law, establishes a grant program to support organized parent-to-parent efforts. The purpose of these programs, called Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers, is to provide training and information (1) to parents of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and (2) to people who work with parents to enable them to participate more fully and effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of their children with disabilities.

Private nonprofit coalitions of parents whose children represent the full range of disabilities, and membership organizations that represent the interests of individuals with disabilities and establish a governing committee of which a majority are parents, are eligible to apply for these grants.

These centers must meet the training and information needs of parents and assist parents to:

- understand the needs and potential of their children with disabilities;
- provide follow-up support for their children's education programs;
- communicate more effectively with professionals;
- participate fully in educational decision-making;
- obtain information about programs, services, and resources, and the degree to which they are appropriate to meet the needs of their children with disabilities; and
- understand the provisions for educating children with disabilities under Part B of IDEA.

Another related resource created by IDEA is the Technical Assistance for Parent Programs (TAPP) project. The TAPP Project's primary responsibility is to serve all PTIs who are currently funded under IDEA, with specialized assistance available in the areas of Assistive Technology, Early Childhood and Inclusion, and Supported Employment.

TAPP coordinates the delivery of technical assistance to the PTIs through four regional centers and a Central Office. In addition to working with each program to decide its priority areas of need, TAPP also publishes an annual PTI directory, *Coalition Quarterly*, and a series of monographs.

A directory of TAPP Offices and the PTI Directory are available from the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Adoption: A Myriad of Options

A moment of reflection reveals that in today's society, adoption can take many forms. From transracial adoption, to single-parent adoption, to adoption of drug-exposed children, to adoption of adolescents, to adoption of foreign-born children, couples considering adoption have many options. Couples are no longer limited to newborn infants with the same racial, cultural, or ethnic background as themselves.

As adoption becomes more complex, related issues also become more complex. More and more research studies are being conducted to study the issues associated with adoption. This article reports on some of those studies.

Transracial Adoption

Over the years, many organizations have raised a concern that black children who are adopted by white parents are not able to develop a positive sense of their racial identity.

However, empirical studies have not supported that claim. In a long-term (20-year) comparative study of the identity and attitudes of two groups of adopted children (white children adopted by white parents, and Black, Korean, Native American, Eskimo, or Vietnamese children adopted by white parents), researchers found that transracially adopted children were aware of and comfortable with their racial identity (Simon & Altstein, 1996).

Based on interviews with study participants, researchers concluded that transracial adoption does not cause special problems associated with the race of the parent or child. Early on, some parents made efforts to provide the child with experiences that could affirm his or her racial identity, such as purchasing books reflecting the child's identity, cooking ethnic food, or taking the child to cultural events related to the child's racial identity. Some parents chose to live in neighborhoods similar to the child's racial identity (e.g., white family living in black neighborhood). Often, children reported growing weary of these efforts to affirm their racial identity, preferring to spend time with their friends at basketball games, for example.

Adolescence marked a difficult period, with episodes of drug abuse, alcohol abuse, truancy, and, in some cases, divorce. However, researchers found that these difficulties were equally true for all families, regardless of whether the family included a transracial adopted child or white-race adopted child.

In conclusion, the researchers found that transracial adoption does not pose special problems of trauma or heartbreak.

Single-Parent Adoptive Homes

A longitudinal study conducted by a researcher at Portland University's School of Social Work found that single-parent adoptive homes can be successful placements for adoptive children. The study reviewed prior research, which indicates that approximately 12% of all adoptions are single-parent adoptions, most single-parent adopters are women, most single parents adopt a child of the same sex, most single parents adopt children who are considered difficult to place (older children, children with physical or emotional disabilities, and children of color), and that single parents who want to adopt an infant or young child without serious problems frequently adopt a foreign-born child (Shireman, 1996).

In Shireman's study, 15 families were followed over a 14-year period. Shireman found that single parents are highly committed to the child and the adoption, are easily able to manage adverse situations (such as illness), have high levels of self-confidence, are highly independent, and have a high ability to develop and use support networks. Of interest was an observed high level of nurturing and commitment to the child in the early years, before school started, to the exclusion of social activity. The child seemed to thrive on the extra attention, and when school years began, the nurturing activity continued in the form of high involvement in PTA, volunteering at school, and similar activities.

Adoption of Drug-Exposed Children

The media have widely reported on probable effects of drug exposure on the lives of infants who were exposed to drugs in utero. Most reports are pessimistic and have contributed to a reluctance of many adoptive parents to adopt a drug-exposed child. Most of these reports are based on conditions in which the drug-exposed child remains with the birth parent, often in an environment in which drug abuse continues to occur during the child's early years.

A study conducted by Barth and Needell (1996) at the University of California at Berkeley examined adoptions in which drug-exposed children were adopted by parents who provided them with a positive, nurturing, drug-free environment. In the study, researchers compared two groups of adopted children four years after their placements: one group who had not been drug-exposed, and one group who were drug-exposed.

The researchers found that drug-exposed children responded positively to nurturing environments and displayed little or no behavioral effects related to being exposed to drugs. Barth and Needell point out that other studies have found drug-exposed children to suffer from attachment difficulties, but the researchers did not find this to be true in their study.

Because of different results in research studies, Barth and Needell point out the need to conduct further studies.

Adoption of Special Needs Children

Groze (1996) looked at issues parents face when they adopt a special needs child. While many adoptive parents felt prepared for adopting a special needs child, they expressed frustration with teachers, daycare providers, and social workers who often view the family as dysfunctional, focus on blaming problems on the child's pre-adoptive circumstances, and are not sensitive to special problems associated with adoption of a special needs child. Because parenting a special needs child can be exhausting, adoptive parents expressed a need to have support services in the form of periodic respite care. Such programs would allow adoptive parents time to rest and replenish reserves to continue with the adoption.

Similarly, Lightburn and Pine's (1996) study of families who adopted a special needs child pointed to the need for supplemental subsidies and services that help make the adoption permanent. Caring for a special needs child often means added expenses for medical care. Lightburn and Pine noted that providing adoptive families with subsidies greatly offsets the costs associated with long-term institutional care states incur when special needs children are not adopted.

In both studies, parents reported being highly satisfied with their decision to adopt a special needs child.

For further information on adoption:

Web Sites:

Faces of Adoption: America's Waiting Children. Sponsored by the National Adoption Center (NAC) and Children Awaiting Parents (CAP), this Web site includes articles and books on adoption, as well as information packets and photolistings of children waiting for adoption.

Adoption. This Web site includes contact information for support groups, lists of newsletters related to adoption, and a list of adoption agencies and organizations.

AdoptioNetwork. This Web site is maintained by volunteers who support each other and those considering adoption. The site contains articles, book reviews, and lists of agencies to contact for adoption information.

Organizations:

National Adoption Information Clearinghouse
5640 Nicholson Lane, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852
Telephone: 301-231-6512

Sources

Barth, R. P., & Needell, B. (1996). Outcomes of drug-exposed children four years post-adoption. *Children and Youth Services Review, 18,* 37-56.

Groze, V. (1996). A 1 and 2 year follow-up study of adoptive families and special needs children. *Children and Youth Services Review, 18,* 57-82.

Lightburn, A., & Pine, B. A. (1996). Supporting and enhancing the adoption of children with developmental disabilities. *Children and Youth Services Review, 18,* 139-162.

Shireman, J. F. (1996). Single parent adoptive homes. *Children and Youth Services Review, 18,* 23-36.

Simon, R. J., & Altstein, H. (1996). The case for transracial adoption. *Children and Youth Services Review, 18,* 5-21.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

The Importance of the Parent-Teacher Conference

The first parent-teacher conference of the year may initially be uncomfortable for both the parent and the teacher. However, a well-conducted conference will move beyond grades or problems that the student may be experiencing. It might be a time for the parents to share their knowledge of their child, including their hopes for the child's future. It could also be an opportunity for the teacher to increase the parents' awareness of their child's classroom experience and how the child relates within the school environment. There are several things that both parents and teachers can do that may help make conferences more successful. Some of those include:

Before the conference:

- Plan ahead; schedule a time that is convenient for both of you and have the conference in a location where you will not be distracted.
- Limit concerns; decide to discuss only two or three areas.
- Clarify who will be present; let everyone know who will be at the conference and why (e.g., perhaps the principal, or special education teacher, or student should be involved).

During the conference:

- Be polite, personable, and positive—remembering the three P's may help everyone relax and adjust to the other person's communication style.
- Avoid lecturing—keeping comments brief will give everyone present an opportunity to share information.
- Give examples—providing specific examples or anecdotes of the child's work or behavior helps everyone to understand the concern.
- Develop common goals—acknowledge what each person can do to support the child in the areas of concern.

After the conference:

- Follow-up—following up with either a written or oral communication or "thank-you" is important for an ongoing supportive relationship.
- Schedule another conference—if anyone present feels that there is need for more discussion or evaluation of the common goals that were established, then another conference should be scheduled soon.

As parents and teachers grow in their ability to work together, respecting their mutual roles as equal partners on the child's educational team, then conferencing and communication will become easier. For more information on parent conferences, see:

TIPS-Conference cues

Parent/Teacher Conference

Source

Robinson, Sandra L. (1997). Parent conference tips. *Teaching Pre K-8, 28*(1), 78.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Anne S. Robertson.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Districts in California Open Single-Sex Academies

Five districts in California are expected to open single-sex academies during the 1997-98 school year. The majority are at the middle school level and will be closely watched by educators across the country. Legal experts wonder if these experiments will survive since a handful of similar programs have been plagued with complaints of discrimination or lawsuits that have forced modification of the admissions policies. One school under investigation by the U.S. Department of Education is the Young Women's Leadership School that opened in New York City in 1996. The school admits only girls in grades 6-8. (See "Fostering School Success in Adolescents: Girls' Issues/Boys' Issues" from Parent News for November 1996.)

Some research shows that many boys and girls, during early adolescence, benefit from single-sex classrooms free from distractions that can flourish in the coed environment. In order to meet the needs of these middle-level students, and hopefully avoid the legal issues that have affected similar schools, California has set up a dual academy approach with identical all-boys and all-girls schools on the same campus. As Karen Humphrey, the state education department's coordinator says regarding this approach, "We want them to be legally sound and educationally sound" (Reinhard, 1997, p. 1).

In order to assure equity, a 1996 state law requires that the districts insure:

- student enrollment in the academies is voluntary,
- students have equal access to them, and
- students have equal opportunity.

Staff at the schools indicate that supplies, curriculum, and methodology are the same in both schools. Proponents of the academy option say that it also increases parental involvement and choices for their children, particularly if a child is having difficulty within the current system.

However, Marcia D. Greenberger of the national Women's Law Center in Washington indicates that the theory of "separate but equal" rarely works. She feels that the new academies in California have "a lot of red flags attached to them" (Reinhard, 1997, p. 16).

Other organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) are voicing their concerns regarding the justification for the separate education.

For some parents, such as Susan Klass, who enrolled her son in a boy's academy, the new approach and extra resources that the state is providing were a deciding factor. The districts each received an additional $500,000 from the state to open the academies, and as Ms. Klass indicates, "It is a wonderful opportunity.... The classes will be smaller, there will be more computers, and even pottery wheels" (Reinhard, 1997, p. 17). For more information:

Source

Reinhard, Beth. (1997, September 10). California opens single-sex academies. *Education Week, 23*(2), pp. 1-17.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Anne S. Robertson.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

New Study on Toilet Training

The March 1997 issue of *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter* included an article on the results of a large-scale study on toilet training originally published in the research journal *Pediatrics.*

Researchers studied 482 healthy toddlers between the ages of 18 and 30 months. Findings include:

- 60% of the children were trained by the age of 3.
- 48% of boys were trained after the age of 3.
- 30% of girls were trained after the age of 3.
- Only 4% of the children were trained before the age of 2.
- Only 2% of the children (both boys and girls) were not trained by the age of 4.

The study also found that regardless of age, children use a potty chair or toilet for bowel movements approximately one month after they have learned to use the potty chair or toilet for urination.

Source

Study bares preferences in potty training. (1997, March). *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Letter, 13*, 3.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Reducing the Risk of Failure by Easing Transitions and Providing Connections within the School Environment

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Many children have difficulty with moving between grades or between schools. These difficulties become particularly apparent during the middle school and high school years and may increase the rate of failure in some students. To reduce these failure rates, Pantleo (1992) and others suggest that schools can implement a number of strategies, particularly during the years when students are making the transition from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school. The first steps are to enhance the school environment and to improve communication between schools, such as between the middle school and the high school. This strategy will also increase staff and parental awareness of the transitions problems that students may face. When the staff at all schools work together, they help provide a continuum of instruction for the students (Pantleo, 1992, p. 26). Other ideas that can assist at the school level include:

- A study skills program—students begin the year before transition and continue the program at the new school.
- A shadow day—students link with an older student and shadow him or her throughout the school day.
- An extracurricular day—students are informed and encouraged to sign up for sports, music, drama, and related clubs.
- Peer leaders—students are linked during the first year with a peer leader who meets with the younger student several times a year for academic or social support.

Pantleo found that when students participated in all four of these programs and received more peer visits, there was a greater likelihood of school success. Other programs that increase student success rates focus on increasing other types of personal attention that a student receives within the school environment such as advisor/advisee programs, after-school tutoring, small cooperative study groups that meet daily emphasizing good study habits, and using specialists to support students with unique learning needs (Douglas, 1996, pp. 4-5). Other high schools are adopting an approach to learning that engages disenfranchised students with internships, real work experiences with other businesses within the community, and portfolio assessment that documents the students performance (Dembicki, 1996a, 1996b). It is important that parents, teachers, and schools remain open to looking at new approaches to supporting students who may be at risk for failure.

Sources

Dembicki, Matthew. (1996a, October 23). Boston treats seniors like job seekers. *Education Daily,* pp. 5-6.

Dembicki, Matthew. (1996b, December 4). Portland High School ushers in Oregon school reform. *Education Daily*, p. 6.

Douglas, Glenn. (1996, Spring/Summer). PASSAGES: Multi-age middle school program for over-age, at-risk students. *The MAGnet*, 5(2), 4-5.

Pantleo, Sam J. (1992, December). *Program to reduce failure rates of ninth grade students.* Applied Research Project, Nova University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 391)

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Children's Books

The ERIC system offers documents called "Information Guides" on a broad range of topics related to education. Of relevance to children's literature is an ERIC Info Guide called "Children's Literature" written by Sue A. Clary in 1994. This online info guide contains links to many Web sites about children's literature. It is available online at:

http://ericir.syr.edu/cgi-bin/markup_infoguides/Alphabetical_List_of_InfoGuides/Children's_Lit-11.95

Following is a list of children's books related to the following topics: Adoption, Toilet Training, and Siblings.

Adoption

A Mother for Choco by Keiko Kasza (Published in 1992 by Putnam).

Happy Adoption Day by John McCutcheon (Published in 1996 by Little, Brown).

Horace by Holly Keller (Published in 1991 by Greenwillow).

How It Feels to Be Adopted by Jill Krementz (Published in 1988 by Knopf).

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon (Published in 1993 by Harcourt).

Toilet Training

Bye-Bye Diapers (Muppet Babies Big Steps) by Ellen Weiss (Published in 1991 by Golden Press).

Going to the Potty (Mr. Rogers' First Experience Series) by Fred Rogers (Published in 1986 by Putnam).

Once upon a Potty: For Her by Alona Frankel (Published in 1987 by Barrons) (Also available in Spanish).

Once upon a Potty: For Him by Alona Frankel (Published in 1987 by Barrons) (Also available in Spanish).

The Princess and the Potty by Wendy Cheyette Lewison (Published in 1994 by Simon & Schuster).

Siblings

Darcy and Gran Don't Like Babies by Jane Cutler (Published by Scholastic in 1993).

Little Sister for Sale by Morse Hamilton (Published by Cobblehill in 1992).

Julius, the Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes (Published by Greenwillow in 1990).

My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother by Patricia Polacco (Published by Simon & Schuster in 1994).

Slither McCreep and His Brother Joe by Tony Johnston (Published in Harcourt in 1992).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Mentorship Online

Hewlett Packard (HP) is sponsoring a mentorship program, through which HP employees around the world can mentor students in grades 5 through 12. This mentoring program takes places over email. For more information, parents can contact David Neils at davidn@fc.hp.com or Scott Durkin at sdurkin@psd.k12.co.us.

Source

Getting ready for college early. (1997, September). *Community Update, 50*, 1.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

Charter Schools Progress Report

The following is taken from the OERI Bulletin, Summer 1997.

The charter school movement is one of the fastest growing in education reform today. A new publication, *A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report*, provides descriptive information about charter laws and schools for the 1995-96 school year. The report, part of a four-year research effort to document and analyze the charter school movement, focuses on issues behind charter school implementation.

The report found that:

- At the beginning of 1996, 252 charter schools were operating in 10 states, and 15 other states and the District of Columbia had passed charter legislation.
- States take different legislative approaches to charter school development that profoundly affect the number, type, and operation of charter schools—and the impact they might have on the public school system. States also vary on how many charter schools are permitted in the state, who grants charters, who may start charter schools, an who sets personnel policies.
- There are many reasons why charter schools are created. The two most common reasons are the desire of a school to "realize an educational vision" and the possibility of increased autonomy. Other reasons include attracting students and parents, engendering parent involvement and ownership, and serving a special population.
- Resource limitations, political resistance, and regulatory problems serve as barriers to the establishment of charter schools. Charter schools face particular challenges such as lack of start-up and operating funds, union or bargaining unit resistance, and state and local school board opposition.
- Charter schools vary in size; however, most tend to be small (more that 60% enroll fewer than 200 students). These schools tend to be predominantly elementary schools that serve students up through grade 8.
- While it is difficult to make generalizations about the racial population of all charter schools, on average, racial composition is similar to statewide averages, or they have a higher proportion of students of color.
- Charter schools serve, on average, a slightly lower proportion of students with disabilities and a lower proportion of limited English proficient students, but they have rates of National School Lunch Program participation similar to the average in other public schools.
- Most charter schools are eligible for Title I funding.

The National Study of Charter Schools sponsored by the Department of Education as authorized by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 is being conducted under contract with RPP International of Emeryville, California. For more information:

Pat Lines at 202-501-7654
OERI Bulletin
Outreach and Customer Services Division
555 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20208-5570

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

What Do I Say? What Do I Do?: Vital Solutions for My Child's Educational Success by Dorothy Rich

Dorothy Rich, the author of *MegaSkills*, has written a new, user-friendly handbook that grows directly from her knowledge of parents' and teachers' concerns. The book includes personal reflections for parents as they struggle with issues such as how to keep their child working to tackle new jobs that may be tough, how to keep their child motivated, and how to keep their child working as part of a team. Key issues covered are confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense, and problem solving. For more information:

MegaSkills Education Center
1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202-466-3633
Fax: 202-833-1400
Internet: http://www.MegaSkillsHSI.org

A Study of Charter Schools: First Year Report 1997

This four-year study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, has a variety of information on charter schools, including an annual survey of all charter schools every year for four years, an ethnographic study of a stratified random sample of 72 charter schools, longitudinal data on student achievement at the 72 schools, site visits, and testing at 28 matched comparison schools. For more information:

National Library of Education
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20208-5721

Internet: http://carei.coled.umn.edu/Charterschools/NatChrtr.html
Internet:http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/GFI/gfichart.html

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Lam, Shui Fong. (1997). ***How the Family Influences Children's Academic Achievement.*** **Garland Publishing, Inc., 1000A Sherman Ave., Hamden, CT 06514; telephone: 800-627-6273; fax: 203-230-1186; email: info@garland.com; Internet: http://www.garlandpub.com ($35).**

Children's academic achievement has been shown to be influenced by many family factors, including family structure, socioeconomic status, and parenting styles. This study investigated the relationships among family structure, socioeconomic status, authoritative parenting, and children's academic achievement in a sample of 181 eighth graders in two inner-city schools in the midwestern United States. How the family influences children's academic achievement was first examined with a social address paradigm, then with a family process paradigm. The interactive effects of social address and family process on children's academic achievement were subsequently examined with an integrated paradigm using path analysis. Results of the study indicate that authoritative parenting and children's academic achievement were significantly correlated. Results also suggest that effective parenting includes: (1) a high degree of monitoring; (2) a high degree of support or involvement; and (3) a high degree of psychological autonomy granting. The results also support the integrated research paradigm as one that can help researchers better understand the intricate relations among various family factors and their impact on children. (Appendices contain the parent-child interaction questionnaire, the scoring scheme used with the questionnaire, and the demographic data sheet used in the study. Contains 75 references.) PS025801

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2. Walsh, David. (1994). ***Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profits Before Values—and What Parents Can Do.*** **Fairview Press, 2450 Riverside Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55454; telephone: 800-544-8207, 612-672-4180; fax: 612-672-4980; Internet: http://www.press.fairview.org (U.S., $11.95; Canada, $13.95).**

Many believe that America's children are exposed to negative messages by the media—violence, irresponsible sex, and materialism—making it difficult for parents to teach traditional values. Noting that what motivates parents is the desire to teach their children right from wrong while what motivates society is financial profit, this book explores the dichotomy between private and societal values and urges parents to counteract the negative effects of a profit-driven society. Chapters include: (1) "The Alarms Are Sounding. Is Anybody Listening?"; (2) "Moral Parents and Immoral Society"; (3) "The Abandonment of America's Children"; (4) "The Power of Advertising"; (5) "Television"; (6) "The Promotion of Violence"; (7) "Self-Discipline and Our Instant Society"; (8) "Winning Isn't Everything—It's the Only Thing"; (9) "Whoever Gets the Most Toys Wins"; (10) "What's in It for Me?"; and (11) "Reclaiming America's Children." The book concludes with community discussion questions, encouraging readers to reflect further on the value issues facing families today, and a survey form designed to be shared with elected officials. PS025783

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3. Forsten, Char; and others. (1997). ***Looping Q&A: 72 Practical Answers to Your Most Pressing Questions.*** **Crystal Springs Books, P.O. Box 500, Ten Sharon Rd., Peterborough, NJ 03458; telephone: 800-321-0401; fax: 800-337-9929 (Item No. 5206, $12.95).**

Looping is a practice that allows single-grade teachers to remain with the same class for two or more years. Organized in a question-and-answer format, this book answers 72 questions about looping commonly asked by teachers and parents, including questions about its benefits, disadvantages, and implementation. Chapters include: (1) "What Is Looping, and What Are Its Benefits?"; (2) "What Questions Do Most Parents Ask about Looping?"; (3) "How Will Looping Affect Me as a Teacher?"; (4) "This All Sounds Too Good To Be True! Are There Downsides with Looping?"; and (5) "I Need Details—How Do I Implement Looping?" The book concludes with an appendix, "Retention—A High-Stakes Decision," and a Resource section. The Resource section contains approximately 300 references organized by subject. PS025780

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4. Booth, Alan, & Dunn, Judith F. (Eds.). (1996). ***Family-School Links: How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes?*** **Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 10 Industrial Ave., Mahwah, NJ 07430-2262 ($29.95).**

The topic of links between families and schools, and their impact on educational outcomes, encompasses questions such as: How far does parental involvement affect a child's school experiences? And, What explains the differences between school, families, and communities as to the extent of such involvement? This book explores issues related to the links between families and schools and how they affect children's educational achievement. The first section of the book focuses on how families and schools can work together to promote children's educational achievement. The four chapters in this section address parent and teacher cooperation and structural factors that impede or enhance family involvement in school. The second section considers the question of how school processes affect children and their families. These four chapters address the controversial issue of whether or not family disadvantage translates into educational disadvantage. The third section addresses whether and how family and household structure are related to variations in parental involvement in children's education. The four chapters address data indicating differences in educational outcomes for children growing up in mother-father families, divorced, single-parent, and remarried families. The fourth section addresses the implications of what has been learned from research into family-school links for policy and intervention. The four chapters in this section address the history of this field of study, policy makers' involvement in fostering family-school links, and current programs. Each of the chapters provides different perspectives and highlights different aspects of school links issues. A summary chapter draws together common threads running through the book and highlights the diversity of perspectives. PS025659

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5. Lewis, Ramon. (1997). ***The Discipline Dilemma: Control, Management, Influence.*** **(2nd ed.). Australian Council for Educational Research, 19 Prospect Hill Rd., Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria 3124, Australia (U.S. funds, $29.95).**

Noting that more democratic values have begun to replace authoritarian values in the classroom, this book offers teachers three different discipline styles and provides guidance in classroom management, discipline strategy, and flexible problem solving. Chapter one of the book addresses general discipline and provides debate on utilizing democratic rather than authoritarian discipline practices. Chapter two addresses teacher stress and classroom discipline, and describes inappropriate behavior, counterproductive responses, and self-defeating attitudes. Chapter three explores classroom techniques for avoiding inappropriate behavior, and includes guidance on avoiding disruptions and building goodwill in the classroom. Chapter four addresses styles of discipline and examines successful teacher-student interaction. Chapter five presents a model of influence, and describes student-owned and teacher-owned problems and a student-oriented approach to problem solving. Chapter six presents a model of control, a teacher-oriented approach, and discusses steps on deciding behavior consequences, while chapter seven presents a model of management, a group-oriented approach, and discusses inappropriate behavior, dealing with the behavior, and observations on Glasser's ten-step approach to student behavior. Chapter eight presents the preceding three models of problem solving at work. Chapter nine addresses influences on the teacher's choice of approach to discipline and provides factors for consideration. Chapter ten addresses preparing students for democratic citizenship, and includes codes of student behavior and their educational impact. PS025631

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6. Bank, Stephen P., & Kahn, Michael D. (1997). ***The Sibling Bond: The First Major Account of the Powerful Emotional Connections among Brothers and Sisters throughout Life.*** **(15th anniversary ed.). Harpercollins Publishers, 1000 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, PA 18512-4621; telephone: 800-242-7737; fax: 800-822-4090 ($30).**

The relationships among brothers and sisters are infinitely varied, but whatever their characteristics, these bonds last throughout life. This book examines the sibling relationship as a distinctive emotional, passionate, painful, and solacing power. Chapter one, "Unraveling the Sibling Bond," addresses research on siblings and development of the sibling bond. Chapter two, "Attachment and Separation in Early Childhood," focuses on parental influence and emotional closeness. Chapter three, "Childhood and Adolescence: The Struggle for Separate Identities," focuses on social comparisons and intimacy. Chapter four, "Patterns of Identification and Sibling Relationships," examines sibling's emotional connections, while chapter five, "Acts of Sacrifice: Loyalty and Caring," focuses on levels of loyalty. Chapter six, "The Sexual Influence of Siblings," focuses on identity differences and sexual modeling, while chapter seven, "Sexuality between Brothers and Sisters," focuses on curiosity and brother-sister love. Chapter eight, "Siblings in Conflict: Bonds of Aggression and Rivalry," focuses on positive aspects of fighting and sibling aggression, while chapter nine, "The Embroiled Family: 'Well' and 'Disturbed' Siblings," addresses how parents arrange sibling relationships. Chapter ten "Siblings as Survivors: Bonds beyond the Grave" focuses on ramifications of sibling death. Chapter 11, "Psychotherapy with Siblings," addresses problems for the psychotherapist in assessing sibling issues in therapy. PS025616

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Association of Birth Defect Children

The Association of Birth Defect Children (ABDC) is a charitable organization that provides free telephone information to parents and professionals about birth defects. ABDC sponsors the *National Birth Defect Registry*, a birth defect prevention project that provides information on possible links between specific birth defects and their causes (e.g., exposures to chemicals during the Gulf War). Members of ABDC receive publications (e.g., fact sheets), special reports, and a newsletter.

Contact

The Association of Birth Defect Children, Inc.
Telephone: 407-245-7035

Family Resource Coalition

The Family Resource Coalition (FRC) is a not-for-profit membership organization. FRC works to increase public understanding of and commitment to families by developing resources for family support programs, and by providing information to individuals and organizations involved in forming public policy. FRC sponsors national and regional conferences, provides consulting and technical assistance to schools and government agencies, and publishes research and "how-to" material on family support issues.

Contact

The Family Resource Coalition
200 S. Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Telephone: 312-341-0900
Fax: 312-341-9361

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters

Innovation in Education

Published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the newsletter is issued three times a year. The current issue contains information on the thematic review of tertiary education, a review of educational policy in Korea, issues of participation, and equity and in-service teacher training. For more information:

Director for Education,
Labour and Social Affairs,
OECD
2 rue Andre-Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16
France

National Center for Children in Poverty

A recent issue of this newsletter, designed to identify and promote strategies to reduce the young child poverty rate, looks at the initiatives that have been developed to improve responsible fatherhood. Other topics covered include Head Start, techniques being used to monitor the welfare of children, and poverty and the effects on brain development in young children. For more information:

NCCP
154 Haven Ave.
New York, NY 10032
Telephone 212-304-7100
Email: nccp@columbia.edu

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Federation for Children with Special Needs

Description: The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) is a center for parents and organizations to work together on behalf of children with special needs and their families. Some of the projects at the FCSN are: (1) Parent Training and Information; (2) Technical Assistance for Parent Programs; (3) Parents Engaged in Education Reform; (4) ICC Leadership Projects; and (5) National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System.

Address: http://www.fcsn.org

Name: Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) Center

Description: PACER center is a nonprofit organization that serves families of children and adults with disabilities. The Web site provides information on new events and projects, articles, newsletters, and links to related sites.

Address: http://www.pacer.org

Name: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education: Parent and Community Involvement

Description: The Parent and Community Involvement area covers the various ways in which parents and the community play a role in the education of linguistically and culturally diverse students. This site contains many articles and brochures (many available in both English and Spanish) as well as links to related sites.

Address: http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/library/parent.html

Name: Mathematics for Parents Newsletter

Description: The *Mathematics for Parents Newsletter* series is aimed at informing parents about how their children think about mathematics. Some of the topics covered are: (1) addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; (2) spatial reasoning; (3) area measurement; and (4) shapes.

Address: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/MIMS/Parent_Newsletters/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Resources for Parents

The Parenting Calendar

Conference: FASTWORKS: Authentic Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education

Date: October 13-14, 1997

Place: Grant Wood Area Education Agency, Cedar Rapids, IA

Description: Families and Schools Together (FAST) is a program of Family Service America. It is a collaborative prevention and parent involvement program designed to address three problems: alcohol and drug abuse, violence and delinquency, and school dropout. This is the sixth FAST regional meeting. This meeting is intended for educators, community professionals, human service providers, and parents.

Contact:

FASTWORKS Regional Conference
Attn: Ms. LaSonda Buck
Family Service America, Inc.
11700 W. Lake Park Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53224
414-359-1040
Fax: 414-359-1074

Conference: Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)

Date: October 29-30, 1997

Place: The Club Hotel by DoubleTree, Louisville, Kentucky

Description: This conference is intended for families, educators, physicians, and social service and health care professionals who live or work with individuals with autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). The conference will feature three workshop presentations: Asperger's Syndrome and the More Able Levels of PDD, Developing Social Skills for Individuals with PDD, and Responding to Communication Needs of Individuals with Autism/PDD.

Contact:

Geneva Centre

250 Davisville Ave.
Suite 200
Toronto, ON M4S 1H2
Canada
Telephone: 416-322-7877
Fax: 416-322-5894

Conference: Teen Pregnancy: An Issue for Everyone

Date: November 11-12, 1997

Place: The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, Pennsylvania

Description: This conference brings together researchers and practitioners in the field of teen pregnancy prevention to explore the root causes of adolescent pregnancy and to learn about the kinds of programs and services that have been most successful in helping teens make healthy choices about their sexuality and behavior.

Contact:

Stephanie Tyworth
The Pennsylvania State University
403 Keller Building
University Park, PA 16802-1304
Telephone: 814-865-0287
Email: sst3@cde.psu.edu
Internet: http://www.cde.psu.edu/C&I/TeenPregnancy/

Conference: Approaches to Developmental Learning Disorders in Infants and Children: Theory and Practice

Date: November 14-16, 1997

Place: Rockville, Maryland

Contact:

Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders
4938 Hampden Lane
Suite 229
Bethesda, MD 20814

Conference: Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Date: November 20-23, 1997

Place: J.W. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC

Description: The keynote speaker for this conference is Cornel West, author of *Race Matters*.

Conference: 12th National Training Institute: ZERO to THREE

Date: December 5-7, 1997

Place: Renaissance Nashville Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

Description: The ZERO to THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families will sponsor their 12th National Training Institute. This conference is intended for practitioners, administrators, researchers, educators, and advocates who want to learn more about and be challenged by cutting-edge issues in the infant/family field.

Contact:

ZERO to THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families
734 15th St., NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005-1013
Telephone: 703-356-8300
Internet: http://www.zerotothree.org

Return to the Parent News for October 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for November 1997

Volume 3, Number 11

- What's New on NPIN
- November's Feature:
  Linda Roberts Speaks at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference
  by Dianne Rothenberg
- Community Spotlight:
  The Vaughn Family center: It's My Story
  by Jorge Lara and Matt Oppenheim
- Of Interest:
  - *A Literacy Activity for the Home: Making Pop-Up Books!*
  - *Homework: What Does the Research Say?*
  - *Recent Studies Underscore the Positives of the Work-Family Relationship*
  - *Real Life Internet Lessons for Kids*
  - *Recent Product Recalls from the U.S. Product Safety Commission*
  - *National Children's Book Week: November 17-23, 1997*
  - *Children's Books*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

Parent News Editorial Information

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NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for November 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during October 1997

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Child Care (all ages) section, the following resources have been added:

- *How does infant and toddler care measure up?*
  Debby Cryer and Leslie Phillipsen summarized the Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers Study (CQ&O) results to help practitioners take an objective look at how well they are meeting the needs of the children in their care. Here are their findings related to infant and toddler programs.
- *The preeschool classroom - Room to improve*
  The article states what is working and details what need improvement in the preschool classroom.

In the Early Childhood: Learning section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *El Reto: !A Leer, América!*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- *The preeschool classroom - Room to improve*
  The article states what is working and details what need improvement in the preschool classroom.
- *Puzzles in early childhood education: Putting the pieces together*
  Children can work on puzzles by themselves, without the help of adults or other children. They can also work together on large puzzles and practice compromising and getting along. This article includes advice for parents who would get puzzles for their children.

In the Helping Your Child Learn at Home section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *El Reto: !A Leer, América!*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth,

and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *When children imitate superheroes*
  When children begin pretending they are superheroes, adults can help them make the most of it. Here are some tips.

In the Children and the Media section, the following resources have been added:

- *When children imitate superheroes*
  When children begin pretending they are superheroes, adults can help them make the most of it. Here are some tips.

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *How the Family Influences Children's Academic Achievement* by Shui Fong Lam
- *Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profiles Before Values--and What Parents Can Do* by David Walsh
- *Looping Q&A: 72 Practical Answers to Your Most Pressing Questions* by Char Forsten
- *Family-School Links: How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes?* by Alan Booth and Judith Dunn
- *The Discipline Dilemma: Control, Management, Influence* by Ramon Lewis
- *The Sibling Bond: The First Major Account of the Powerful Emotional Connections among Brothers and Sisters throughout Life* by Stephen Bank and Michael Kahn

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Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Association of Birth Defect Children
- Family Resource Coalition

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Innovation in Education*
- *National Center for Children in Poverty*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Parent News for November 1997

November's Feature

Linda Roberts Speaks at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference

by Dianne Rothenberg

Dr. Linda Roberts, Special Assistant to Secretary of Education Richard Riley and Director of the Office of Educational Technology in the U.S. Department of Education, spoke candidly to *Parent News* reporters at the Families, Technology, and Education conference in Chicago on Friday, October 31, 1997, about the role that parents can play in promoting the use of technology in schools.

Dr. Roberts urged parents to be involved in *all* aspects of education—not just technology use—and to work toward promoting the use of technology by all students. She suggested that parents show sustained interest in the educational process by serving on school committees, making their voices heard in the local education budget process, and finding out about such projects as the U.S. Tech Corps, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving K-12 education through the effective integration of technology into the learning environment, and how it can help local schools increase technology use.

> "The data still show tremendous disparities in computer use among schools," said Roberts. "Schools with high proportions of minority students are less likely to have connections, and for the smallest [usually rural] schools, telecommunications costs are always higher. The E-Rate should help."

The Education Rate (E-Rate) resulted from a Federal Communications Commission 1997 regulatory decision that starting in 1998 will give eligible schools and libraries discounts for a wide range of telecommunication services. These discounts will range from 20% to 90% based on economic disadvantage and geographic location.

Can parents really make a difference in local schools' use of technology? According to Roberts: "You come into a school or schools in the same district, the same city, and in one school there is so much there, you can clearly see the impact of [parents'] presence—more funds for technology, of course, but more than funds. Their presence can bring about the use of donated computers." Roberts pointed out that the struggle was so much greater in the school without parental involvement.

Roberts believes we are at a stage where we could benefit from more focused research and development (R&D) efforts and be more deliberate about measuring the impact of technology. Gains in speech recognition technologies, for example, could be useful for learners for whom English is a second language. Other technologies might be useful in helping children achieve fluency as readers—a national goal for children leaving third grade. "We need breakthroughs in the use of technology in education," stated Roberts, "similar to those in medicine, where, for example, brain surgery today uses scanning technology. It's time for us to look at these kinds of tools and the conditions under which they yield the best results. We need hardware and software R&D efforts to focus on advances in education."

"But," added Roberts, "Technology alone NEVER makes the difference in student performance." She pointed out that Blackstock Middle School (featured in the U.S. Department of Education's Satellite Town Meeting of October 21, 1997, as a school that uses technology extensively) spent a year on revising their curriculum. "Technology was only one of a set of resources used to improve the school."

Schools that use technology well invest in staff development, according to Roberts. By some measures, one-third of the technology budget should be devoted to staff development in the form of curriculum workshops, computers for teachers, or summer training. A recent report from SRI Consulting, titled *Technology's Role in Education Reform*, by Barbara Means and Kerry Olson (Report no. D96-1989) addresses the question of whether technology can provide significant support for constructivist, project-based teaching and learning approaches and the associated issue of the elements necessary for an effective implementation of technology within an educational reform context. Forming the centerpiece of this report are case studies of nine sites that have been using technology in ways that enhance a restructuring of the classroom around students' needs and project-based activities. This study shows that teams of teachers working on integrating technology are more successful than individual teachers working alone, and that schools with focused educational objectives showed significant gains.

Roberts suggests that we also need to begin to examine the impact of school technology projects. Parents can help by asking questions: How are we spending this money? Who is accountable for how it is spent? Is there a plan, or can we help develop one? What educational goals will be met through the use of technology? What do you want to do with the computers?

More information on Roberts' keynote address will soon be available on the Families, Technology, and Education Conference Web site.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Community Spotlight

The Vaughn Family Center: It's My Story

by Jorge Lara with Matt Oppenheim

The following community spotlight is reprinted with permission from the *Family Resources Coalition Report; Parents Leading the Way,* Volume 15, Number 2, Summer 1996, pp. 4-5.

When I came to the U.S., I was angry and afraid. My heart was still in Mexico, my father was alcoholic, and I couldn't find work. But I was also a social activist and a self-starter. At the age of seven, I was selling popsicles, newspapers, and bread on the streets of Ciudad Guzman in Jalisco, Mexico. At school, we held a strike to stop corruption and got the principal fired. Later, while living in Florida, I learned more about how to stand up for my rights from the Cubans.

After we moved to California, my daughter entered the school in Pacoima, where there were mainly Black and Latino students but teachers who were almost all Anglo. I felt that many of the problems children faced were racial. Teachers were judgmental, and that caused resentment from parents. We hired a neutral principal who was Chinese, and she encouraged parents to work with the teachers.

My daughter wasn't learning and no one would help her. Finally the principal got her into special education. That was a turning point for me, because I began to trust the principal. Then I started volunteering at the school. I began to notice many problems. There were often four benches full of kids sitting in the hot sun going through detention. Could this be right?

One day in 1990, I was invited to help administer the state achievement test to first-graders. I felt that the teacher wanted them to fail so that the school would get more money for special programs. During the test, I cried and had to leave. After that, I promised myself that I would do whatever it took to guarantee the success of every child in my community.

The welfare system kills the spirit of the people. I have witnessed families being destroyed. It is very difficult to see people losing their dreams and the desire to achieve goals. I promised myself I would never go on welfare and that I would do whatever it took to stop people in my community from doing so. People were afraid to get involved in the school, because they had been used so many times before. It takes us a long time to build trust.

A group of parents started to talk about the need for changes. Later, two community facilitators from Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) and United Way came and said they wanted to work with us. They'd heard that our school was one of the worst in Los Angeles. At first, we were skeptical, but they convinced us that they wanted to understand our needs and assist us in creating a school-based family support initiative. We decided that family health and school readiness were our greatest concerns. They invited service providers from agencies, who listened and agreed to work with us on our own terms. We formed a commission comprised of parents and these providers to oversee the development of our family center. They tried to convince us that the center should be run by "professionals," but we wanted to run the center, too. People often saw us as having deficits, but we knew that we were "experts." Through this planning process, the Vaughn Family Center was born.

Soon Yoland Trevino was hired as Director. We wanted someone special, who would be our mentor, guide, and advocate. In the interview, we challenged Yoland to see if she had the qualities that we needed in our community, and it was soon obvious that she was the right one for the position. A group of parent volunteers started working with her. She helped us express our anger and pushed us to develop skills and use our initiative. When funds came through, I was hired as a part-time family advocate. At first, I thought that money was just handed out to schools and programs. Now I know a lot more about getting grants, and have helped develop several myself. It was obvious that I would be making less that half what I had been making as an electrician, but I decided to continue. For the first time, I saw new hope for my community. They asked me for my commitment, and I said, "You have it." My wife was strongly opposed at first. She could not understand why I would contribute less to my own family to serve children who were not related to me. Little did she know that this would bring great success to our family, that it would bring happiness and opportunities to us and our children. She now volunteers and is as committed as I am. She helps guide my decisions for the success of the community.

Yoland brought people in to offer training at the Vaughn Family Center. I quickly learned basic office and social-work skills. When I started calling agencies on the phone, I was almost trembling because I felt so inferior, but Yoland instilled in me the knowledge that I was working for the people of the community and had a right to be assertive. Then I started doing family visits. The first few times my heart was in my throat and I couldn't go. Then after seeing a few families, I became ecstatic: It was easier than I thought. I was making a good connection with families in need and felt that we were starting to make a difference. I learned a great deal from these families, including the ability to understand that their strengths could support their needs. We connected them with health and counseling services and provided free food and clothing. I was their cheerleader, coach, and mentor.

From the start, the family center was my family: everyone cared and supported one another. We started dreaming about the future and talking about our vision. We wanted a safe environment for our children where they could succeed in life. But we wanted more. We wanted everyone to have financial independence and to take charge of the future of our community.

The school became one of the first Chartered schools in California, and I served on several of the many committees that ran the school. The Chartered Schools Initiative allows schools to become independent from the school district and be governed by parents and teachers. The hardest job was sitting on the budget committee, where there were constant arguments about funds. I felt that some of the teachers wanted money for themselves and didn't really want to help the community. Other teachers were great and cared a lot for the needs of our children.

I became a mentor for volunteers and realized that is was important to be a role model. I have started teaching them the way that Yoland taught me, encouraging their self-confidence and challenging them to take the initiative, while giving them support whenever they needed it. The other day, a new community coordinator said he was scared to call an agency on the phone. I told him that he wasn't speaking for himself but for the center and the community. He came to me later with a big smile and said that he had enjoyed making the call.

A businessman, Kay Inaba, came to us two year ago and started talking about the "Pacoima Urban Village." I was wondering what his angle was, but after awhile realized that he wanted to help. He helped us dream about our future as a village becoming self-sufficient by unleashing human capital. We believed the village would become a healthy, safe, and clean community.

We recently opened a center for the Pacoima Urban Village where people come in droves to find out about jobs and training opportunities that we post. We try to tell each person who visits about our vision and inspire them to volunteer. The job club has become the core of our community's unfolding. It has created an atmosphere in which partners in the project mix with community members. They learn from each other, reflect upon experiences, develop aspirations, discover opportunities for employment and economic development, and give back to their community. We formed an organization called Americans for Better Communities (ABC), a national collaboration among people in the Midwest, New York, and Los Angeles. All of us are working to promote the socioeconomic status and infrastructure of our communities. We arranged for a group of former gang members to go to New York to take part in a program called Banana Kelly, where they learned about construction and business management. Now they're back and have started renovating a house.

Now I do so many things it's hard to keep track of them. I work in the Pacoima Urban Village, helping people to get jobs and training. I still see some of my family clients and help them out from time to time. I work in collaboration with community-based organizations, businesses, and churches. I am a member of the board of directors of an organization that helps local social programs to work together. Our center recently won a grant to work with Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF) in developing a plan for the future of our village. We are mentoring five other community centers and work with area business people. I have traveled all over the states to talk about our program and provide parent training. I am also a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

I often see people that are just like I was: angry and afraid, with nowhere to turn. You can't imagine how great it feels to be able to help lift them up, and I still often cry about it.

A Parent Leader's Tips for Promoting Parent Involvement

1. Parents and community members have a lot to express and have a lot of skills already; just support them and encourage them to become who they already are.
2. The community belongs to the people who live there; they have to make the decisions.
3. Professionals have to be partners with parents, and parent leaders have to be respected and paid just the same as anyone else.
4. Teach people by being a good role model, and give them a lot of freedom to experiment and express themselves.
5. Dream about the future, and learn how to make your dreams a reality.
6. Don't use language that diminishes people and their community, such as "at risk," "dysfunctional," and "case management" (who is in the position to manage someone's life?).
7. Never underestimate the role of parents and community members.

8. Never come with your own agenda to a neighborhood. Ask people what they want. They are the experts.
9. Don't exploit community knowledge. In many communities, outside experts have come and used residents' knowledge to dominate them. Show that you can be trusted to not do the same.

Jorge Lara is Job Developer at Vaughn Family Center.

Matt Oppenheim is an ethnographer from California State University, Long Beach, who is writing about the Pacoima Urban Village as a dynamic learning community. He wants to utilize local knowledge in reforming curricula and to assist community building through self-evaluation.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for October 1997

Of Interest

A Literacy Activity for the Home: Making Pop-Up Books!

by Joan Irvine

I know that more and more parents are buying books for their children and making time for reading together. An additional activity that can promote family literacy is making pop-up books and pop-up cards together.

As well as being an author of pop-up books, I am a half-time teacher of a Grade 3 class in Canada. This year, the mother of a student told me that her daughter was very excited because she had "The Pop-up Lady" as her teacher.

Indeed, I do many pop-ups with my students. The activities created in my classroom could easily be done at home. My students make pop-up cards for almost all holidays. The pop-up card on my Web site can be adapted to become a scary monster for Halloween or a bird surrounded by hearts for Valentine's Day. Pop-up ideas can be used for birthday cards, get-well cards, and thank-you cards.

Making pop-ups is also a fun way for children to learn new forms of writing. After making the pop-up mouth, why not add a speech bubble and insert a poem, joke, or riddle?

At the end of the school-year, I always instruct my students on how to make their own pop-up books. The children write a short story and then break it into five sections. They create a pop-up page for each section of their story. The completed pages are glued together, and a simple cover is added to create a book. The children are very proud of their pop-up books and love reading them to their families and friends.

Have fun with creating the pop-up card on my Web site. For more information on my books, please go to:

http://www.makersgallery.com/joanirvine/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

Homework: What Does the Research Say?

by Debbie Reese

Homework is one of the sacred cows of education (Conrath, 1992). According to Shultz (1995), students view it as a monster, and it is the bane of all parents. With the school year in full swing, children are being assigned homework, and parents are coping or facilitating its completion as best they can.

Parents often have questions about why homework is assigned, how beneficial it is, and how they may best help their child complete homework. A recent study reported on five major themes of parents' thinking about homework: (1) concern about their child's unique characteristics as balanced with school demands, (2) questions about the appropriate level of independent work assigned to their child, (3) concerns about how they can best structure homework activities, (4) concerns about how involved they should be in helping their child complete homework, and (5) reflections on what it means to them when they are or are not successful at being able to help their children complete assignments (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995).

Corno (1996) reports five widespread misconceptions about homework:

1. *The best teachers give homework regularly.* Actually, the best teachers vary homework assignments according to the task at hand, and many teachers view homework policies that state it must be assigned on a regular basis as undermining their curricular goals and personal teaching style.
2. *More homework is better than less.* The amount of work assigned has not been proven to be a reliable indicator of increased academic performance.
3. *Parents want their children to have homework.* Parents want their children to do well in school, but that desire cannot be interpreted to mean that they want their children to have homework if it is not going to improve their academic achievement.
4. *Homework supports what students learn in school.* Teachers give different reasons for why they assign homework, and many homework assignments do not serve to help students reorganize and extend their learning.
5. *Homework fosters discipline and personal responsibility.* There is little evidence to support this widely held idea. Corno (1996, p. 28) says that this finding is only "one small piece of the bigger pie" and that parents foster these characteristics in larger, broader ways than through "doing homework."

In a review of research on homework, Cooper (1994) notes that homework can lead to greater parental involvement in school, but it can also result in increased differences between high and low achievers. In their study of academic achievement of eighth-grade students, Bruce and Singh (1996) found that homework improved, not only the student's grades, but also their scores on standardized tests. Cooper (1994) lists the benefits researchers attribute to homework:

- Immediate effects on achievement and learning, including: (1) better retention of factual knowledge, (2) increased understanding, (3) better critical thinking concept formation, (4) better information processing, and (5) curriculum enrichment.
- Long-term academic effects, including: (1) learning encouraged during leisure time, (2) improved attitude toward school, and (3) better study habits and skills.
- Nonacademic long-term effects, including: (1) greater self-direction, (2) greater self-discipline, (3) better time organization, (4) more inquisitiveness, and (5) more independent problem solving.

Cooper (1994) also lists these negative effects, as reported by researchers:

- Satiation, which leads to loss of interest in academic material and physical and emotional fatigue.
- Denial of access to leisure time and community activities, as evidenced by parental interference, pressure to compete and perform well, and confusion on instructional techniques.
- Cheating through copying from other students or through having a tutor provide help beyond tutoring.

Looking at achievement on standardized tests and grades, the research studies that compare the achievement of students who receive homework with those who do not receive homework indicate that homework effects varied according to grade level:

- Students in high school who receive homework outperform those who do not receive homework by 69%. Time spent on homework outside of school had greater effects than time spent studying at school. Achievement effects increased according to the amount of time spent on homework.
- Students in junior high who receive homework outperform those who do not receive homework by 35%. Homework was more effective than in-school supervised study. Achievement effects increased as time spent on homework increased to two hours, but more than two hours spent on homework did not increase achievement.
- Students in elementary school who receive homework perform no differently than those who do not. In-school supervised study had a greater impact on achievement than homework, and achievement did not increase if they spent more time on homework. Cooper cautions that this finding does not mean that elementary school students should not receive homework; rather parents should not expect homework to affect achievement. At this level, homework is important because it promotes good study habits and positive attitudes toward school, and because homework makes it clear to the student that learning can also take place outside of the school environment.

Clearly, homework is a complex issue that brings together the child, parent, and teacher in planned and unplanned ways, with positive and negative outcomes. Homework is widely written about in newspaper columns for parents, and a plethora of books are available on the subject. Indeed, a search of one of the largest online bookstores, using the word "homework," resulted in 71 titles related to homework. Some were children's books (such as *The Berenstain Bears and the Homework Hassle),* but the majority were "how to" books written for parents.

Perhaps parents with concerns about homework can consider doing more than reading "how to" books.

They can set up an appointment to talk with the teacher to discuss school policies. By getting involved, perhaps by forming parent/teacher committees to look at the reasons teachers assign homework and school policies for homework, parents can help schools develop more helpful and useful policies.

For further information:

Helping with Homework: A Parent's Guide to Information Problem-Solving, by Robert E. Berkowitz, can be viewed at http://ericir.syr.edu/ithome/digests/helphome.html.

Helping Your Child with Homework, by the U.S. Department of Education, can be viewed at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Homework/index.html.

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

Recent Studies Underscore the Positives of the Work-Family Relationship

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Much attention on work and family issues focuses on the struggles and challenges of meeting the demands of both. Nevertheless, a recent article in the *APA Monitor* reminds us of the benefits of work to families and of families to work. For example, good experiences at work have been found to buffer people from stress at home, while a healthy family life has been found to reduce stress at work.

Benefits of Work

It is commonly noted that dual earner families face increasing time pressures as they try to balance work with family responsibilities. Yet, according to Dr. Rosalind Barnett, a psychologist at Brandies University and Radcliffe College, "parents seem to be coping well." She found, for example, in a study of 300 dual earner couples that they were generally happy, healthy, and well adjusted.

Other studies, the article notes, reveal that employed women show a higher level of psychological well-being than nonemployed women. In addition, it has been shown that having both parents working provides financial security that many single earner households do not share.

Benefits of Family

Dr. Barnett has also found that positive experiences at home help people cope with stress at work. In a study of 300 men (180 who had children), for example, it was revealed that those who had positive relationships with their spouses or their children felt less stress at work and coped better with problems at work. She explains that these results indicate that "although high levels of job stress can cause high levels of psychological stress, a good relationship at home can decrease that stress dramatically."

When investigating how men's experiences in their marriages affected their physical health, Dr. Barnett points out that parenting experiences best predicted men's physical health, while work experiences had no significant impact. The implication of this finding is that the role of men as fathers and as part of a family has a large impact on their work experience.

Example of the Benefits of Family to Work

Despite these research findings, many studies of large companies still find that employers hold stereotypes about the role of men and women in workówhere men are expected to work outside the home, while women are expected to tend to the home and family, according to Dr. Robert Burke of York University. Because of this view, standard work practices often fail to consider an employee's home life in their policies, for example, by maintaining inflexible work schedules. A recent study, however, shows that if companies incorporate the family into how they plan work activities, they can improve employee health and enhance worker satisfaction and productivity.

In this study, Xerox Corporation, Tandem Computers, Inc., and Corning, Inc., were interested in working with their employees to create work conditions where work and family responsibilities were integrated without sacrificing productivity or profit. Groups of researchers collaborated with individual work groups at each of these companies to reorganize and restructure their work by finding the links between work-family concerns, such as child care and long hours, and patterns of working, such as work schedules and required overtime.

While this approach led to different interventions for each group, the researchers found that when work was restructured with the goal of improving employees' personal lives, productivity and innovation in the workplace increased.

For example, at one company, workers were allowed to use all work-family benefits at their discretion, a practice that was not common. Team members worked together to develop schedules that fit personal needs but that kept an adequate number of workers available to cover each hour of the day. As a result, this site reported a 30% decrease in absenteeism. In addition, workers' ability to respond to customers increased because office coverage was extended. Finally, it was found that teams became more effective, self-directed, and independent.

Dr. Lotte Bailyn, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management, argues that this study tells us that "we need to stop thinking about work and families as adversaries." Instead, it is important for businesses to consider the impact of their decisions and policies on their employees' personal lives and change job requirements to allow employees to accomplish their work as well as have more time for families. According to the results of the studies described in this article, such changes lead to innovative, more productive, and happier employees.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Source

Quelling today's conflict between home and work. (1997, July). *APA Monitor*, p. 1, 16.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

Real Life Internet Lessons for Kids

by Adam C. Engst

Over the years, we've all built up ways of interacting on the Internet. Those behaviors are based on our experience, both online and in the real world. Newcomers to the Internet often make mistakes because they have only non-Internet experiences. But imagine how you'd do if you were new to the Internet and also lacked experience in real life: you'd be at sea in a world with its own strange rules and without the basics most of us fall back on in unfamiliar situations.

That's a bit what it's like to be a kid on the Internet, and although there is plenty of advice for Internet newcomers, it's seldom tailored to kids. That's what I plan to do here, and this article is written explicitly to younger Internet users. I hope kids (or frankly, those who are just young on the Internet) can make use of this information when learning about the Internet. More important, perhaps, I want this advice to help jump-start discussions about the reality of the Internet between children and parents or teachers. Education is all-important, and learning about the Internet should be no exception.

Choosing an Email Username—Sometimes you can choose your own email username when you're first getting on the Internet. That's great, but think carefully about what you choose. Email usernames should be short, easy to type, and easy to remember. It's a good idea to use your name or initials if possible, since those will be the easiest for others to remember (you almost never use your email address yourself, whereas other people use it constantly). You can choose a nickname or other word for your email username, but I'd caution against picking something you think is funny right now but might hate in a year, or a username which refers to something no one will remember in a year. You may have to live with your email username for a long time.

Spelling and Grammar—Most of the time you communicate with people on the Internet in writing. Thus, how you write affects how other people think of you. It's a bit like clothes—wear the "wrong" clothes and some people will consider you a serious dork. Similarly, if you write badly in email, some people will assume that you're not particularly bright. It's all related to your audience, so if you're writing to a friend, things like proper spelling and grammar may not be that important, but if you're sending a message to a discussion list read by people who don't know you, it's a good idea to spend more time on your message so it's clear and correct. The goal of communication is to convey information to another person, and if your spelling and grammar make your messages hard to understand, you're failing at communicating, just as if you mumbled while speaking.

Oh, as a side note, if you're sending email to adults and you want them to take you seriously or to help you, try to avoid current slang words (adults won't understand those words, so there's no point in using them), put blank lines between paragraphs (they make your messages easier to read), and don't overdo the punctuation. There's nothing that marks a message from a kid more than having sentences end in !!!!!!

instead of just a single period.

Also, don't write with the Caps Lock down unless you mean to have your message come across as though you're shouting. There's no arguing with this one—it's just the way things are on the Internet, and if you use only capital letters, people think you're shouting. Some people only use lowercase letters for much the same reason—they feel it makes their messages come across as though they're speaking softly. I generally recommend using normal case, capitalizing the first words in sentence and proper nouns and the like because it's easier to read.

Chain Mail—If you ever receive an email message that says you must send it to 10 friends or else you'll have bad luck, immediately delete it and don't send it to anyone! Messages that tell you to forward them on to other people are called "chain mail" and they are an incredible annoyance on the Internet. Some chain mail purports to be for a good cause, but chain mail never comes with an expiration date, even when the good cause was over years ago. The problem is that gullible people keep sending chain mail around. So, even if you think it's funny, please don't participate in chain mail. If everyone did, it could potentially overwhelm the Internet because of the massive number of messages that would be generated. It's a serious enough problem that some colleges and universities consider sending chain mail a violation of the campus computing rules, and you can get in big trouble for sending it.

For a real-life example of how chain mail is dangerous, first take an eight by eight checkerboard and put two pennies on the first square in the lower left-hand corner. Then, moving left-to-right, double the number of pennies on each square, moving up a row when you get to the end of a row. So, there are two pennies on square 1, four pennies on square 2, eight pennies on square 3, 16 pennies on square 4, 32 pennies on square 5, 64 pennies on square 6, 128 pennies on square 7, and 256 pennies on square 8. That's $2.56, right? Let's just talk about it in terms of money from now on. On the next row, the amount of money is up to $5.12 on square 9, $10.24 on square 10, $20.48 on square 11, $40.96 on square 12, $81.92 on square 13, $163.84 on square 14, $327.68 on square 15, and $655.36 to finish the second row on square 16. If you were to continue this exercise for all 64 squares on our checkerboard, you'd have to put $18,446,700,000,000,000,000 on that final square. Not even Bill Gates has that kind of money.

So, you can see that if a piece of chain mail is forwarded to just two people who also forward it on for 64 generations, there would be so many copies of the message that no real email could ever hope to get through.

Spam Is Scam—An unfortunate fact of life on the Internet is unsolicited commercial email, more commonly known as "spam." Basically, if you have an email address, it's likely that someone will send you mail that you didn't ask for trying to sell you something. There isn't much you can do about spam other than delete it, but keep in mind that anything that's offered via spam mail is almost guaranteed to be a scam. Just like in the real world, if something sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam.

Email Is Not Private—Many people assume that email is private and secure, but unfortunately, just as there's no real way to prevent people from snooping in your room, there's no guaranteed way to prevent others from reading your email. In other words, don't use email for anything that could prove truly embarrassing or you will regret it, sooner or later.

Be careful of mailing lists. If you get a message from someone via a mailing list, and you reply to that message, there's a good chance your reply will go back to the list and thus to everyone on the list. If you meant your reply to go only to the original sender of the message, it can prove extremely embarrassing. To avoid making this mistake, look at the To line in your email program when you're writing a reply, particularly if the reply is of a personal nature. Make sure the To line contains the email address of the person to whom you want to send the reply, and not a mailing list.

Chat Room Identities—If you're participating in a chat room, be it in the Internet's IRC (Internet Relay Chat), AOL's chat rooms, or somewhere else, assume that no one is who they say. It's common practice for people to take on alternate identities when they're in a chat room. There's nothing wrong with role-playing, but some people do this for purely deceptive purposes. For instance, the majority of people using chat on the Internet or AOL are teenage boys or adult men, so the chances of it being true when someone claims they're a cute 14-year-old girl are extremely low. Don't believe anything you're told in a chat room—since you can't evaluate the source of the information, you can't tell whether or not the information might or might not be accurate.

Don't Be Gullible—Do you believe everything you're told? How about everything you read? I certainly hope not! You should always be skeptical, and information on the Internet carries no more of a guarantee of accuracy than information from anywhere else. Just as you can find books that put forth outright lies, so too can you find Web sites that propagate incorrect information. The same will apply to email, Usenet news, and chat rooms—you must always try to figure out if the information you find or receive is accurate. The best way to do that is to look for more information on the topic, then see how that additional information compares and where it comes from.

For instance, if I tell you in a chat room that the moon is made of green cheese, you could check my statement by searching in a Web search engine like Alta Vista on something like "moon composition green cheese." If you found a Web site run by NASA talking about the composition of moon rocks and a reference regarding the moon being made of cheese in a collection of children's stories, you can then decide if NASA is more of an authority on the moon (NASA astronauts having visited it) than a children's story.

Meeting in Real Life—At some point, you may want to meet someone in person who you've talked to on the Internet. Although it's fun to do this most of the time, be aware that it's also potentially very dangerous, since you know nothing about this person other than what they've told you. And, as I noted above, they could be lying. So here's my advice.

First, tell your parents and get permission to meet this person. Sneaking around behind their backs will only make things a lot worse when they find out, and parents always find out eventually. Second, arrange to meet in a public place—never in private. That may sound alarmist, but meeting in a public place eliminates the possibility of many bad things happening without damaging the enjoyment of the meeting. Third, don't go alone—take someone with you. Fourth and finally, never travel a long distance to meet someone in an unfamiliar city.

If you think I'm being paranoid, imagine a movie where the main character has a habit of making the wrong decision and ending up in trouble. You know ahead of time that something bad is going to happen, because of the creepy soundtrack. The music swells, and you're thinking "Don't arrange to meet at the cemetery at midnight, you idiot! We know that chat room cutie is really a homicidal maniac with a fetish for pulling the wings off flies." Now imagine yourself as the main character and see if you think that someone watching you would be hearing the creepy music and thinking "Don't be stupid!" If so, don't do the stupid thing.

Reprinted with permission from the author, Adam C. Engst. First appeared in *NetBITS* .

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

Recent Product Recalls from the U.S. Product Safety Commission

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First Alert True Fit Safety Gates

BRK Brands Inc. is voluntarily recalling about 18,000 First Alert True Fit Safety Gates. BRK has received over 200 reports of plastic parts, including bumpers, hinges, and handle pieces, breaking off—sometimes into small pieces. Although no choking pieces have been reported, the potential choking hazard to young children is a concern.

All model CSSG1 gates made from October 1996 through May 1997 should be taken out of use. Consumers should call BRK toll-free at 888-777-5599 to obtain a free replacement gate. First Alert True Fit Safety Gates made beginning in June 1997 are not involved in this recall.

Francisca Baby Cribs—Models 343-3935 and 343-4065

JC Penney of Plano, Texas, is recalling about 6,000 full-size wooden baby cribs. The cribs' side-rail spindles are too short and can loosen and separate, creating a space greater than 2-3/8 inches between the slats. Babies can be strangled if their heads become entrapped between the slats, or babies could be seriously injured if they fall out of the crib.

The manufacturer's identification, which includes the model number, is located on the bottom of the mattress support. JC Penney catalogs sold the cribs from August 1996 through April 1997. Consumers should stop using the cribs immediately and return them to the nearest JC Penney catalog store for a refund or replacement. If consumers cannot get to a store, call 800-709-5777.

Toy Hot Pet Car

United Tradeline Inc. is recalling about 4,400 battery-operated toy cars. The Hot Pet Car is a red car driven by a yellow dog with orange ears wearing a purple bow and using a cellular phone. The car has decals bearing the words "YAHOO!" and "No. 1." The toy is packaged in a green box labeled in part "HOT PET CAR," and "I.C. SOUND." The model number is HK-736 and is written on the side of the box. The toy is being recalled because it contains small pieces that could break off the cars, presenting a serious aspiration hazard to young children.

Consumers should take these toys away from young children immediately and call United Tradeline Inc. at 888-898-9296 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. PDT Monday through Friday, or write the company at 11800 E.

Clark St., Arcadia, CA 91006.

Halcyon WaterSpring Inc. Dex Wipe Warmers

Halcyon WaterSpring Inc. of Ontario, Canada, is recalling about 536,000 Dex Wipe Warmers, an electric heating pad that warms baby wipes. The Wipe Warmers, distributed by Dex Products Inc., of Benicia, California, could overheat and melt.

Halcyon WaterSpring is aware of six incidents involving melting of the product and one alleged fire of undetermined cause where other products were present.

The Wipe Warmer is about 27 inches long and 3-1/2 inches wide, and wraps around disposable plastic containers to warm the baby wipes inside. The product's cloth cover is white; covered with pink, blue, yellow, and green handprints; and has Velcro fasteners. The tan or off-white plastic warmer unit inside the cloth cover has a white sticker that lists the model number, WW-01. The warmer comes in a mostly purple box with the words, "Dex Products Wipe Warmer, A must for every nursery!" printed in white. Various retail stores nationwide sold the Wipe Warmers from January 1994 through December 1996.

Consumers should stop using the Wipe Warmer immediately and call Halcyon WaterSpring Inc. at 888-735-5585 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EDT Monday through Friday for information on how to receive a full refund or replacement. Consumers also can write to Halcyon WaterSpring Inc., 355 Champagne Dr., Donsview, Ontario, Canada M3J266.

Recall of Stuffed Bears

Nadel & Sons Toy Corp. of New York, New York, is voluntarily recalling about 8,000 stuffed bears. The eyes of the bears can become detached, presenting a choking hazard to young children. CPSC and Nadel & Sons are aware of one incident where a child started to choke as a result of a detached eye from one of these bears.

The plush bears involved in this recall are the 12- and 13-inch Pajama Bears. The 12-inch bear is white, with brown eyes and a pink nose and mouth. The 12-inch bear is wearing one-piece, ruffled-collar pajamas that have gray and mint green or yellow and peach floral prints with elasticized cuffs at the wrist, ankle, and neck. The bear's paws have the same print as the pajama. The 13-inch bear also is white, has a black nose and eyes, and its one-piece pajamas have a multicolored fish or dinosaur design with a red bow on a white collar. The pajama is permanently attached, and the bear's ears have the same print as the pajama. A sewn-in label on the pajamas reads in part, "Nadel & Sons Toy Corp...Made in China."

Amusement parks and roadside entertainment centers, including Busch Gardens Theme Park in Tampa, Florida; Dutch Wonderland in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Play Day Amusements in Seaside Heights, New Jersey; distributed the stuffed bears from October 1995 to May 1997 as prizes at game booths or in game machines.

Consumers should take these stuffed bears away from young children immediately and return them to Nadel & Sons Toy Corp. for a $5 refund plus the cost of postage. For more information about this recall, consumers should call Nadel & Sons Toy Corp. at 800-234-4697 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. EDT

Monday through Friday.

These recalls were posted on October 21, 1997, to the FAMNET listserv (the listserv of the USDA Cooperative Extension Service). For more information about any of these recalls or to find out more about any other previous recalls, call the Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline at 800-638-8270, or visit their Web site at http://www.cpsc.gov.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

National Children's Book Week: November 17-23, 1997

In the United States, we have been celebrating National Children's Book Week since 1919. The Children's Book Council administers the event and selects a new theme each year. Well-known authors and illustrators of children's books are invited to collaborate on posters, streamers, bookmarks, and other items, all of which are designed to encourage children to read.

To support President Clinton's program "America Reads," the American Booksellers Association, the Association of Booksellers for Children, and Scholastic, Inc., are working together on the "Prescription for Reading Partnership." The program grew out of the White House Conference on Early Childhood and Brain Development that presented research showing that reading to children in their early years actually helps their brains to grow and lays the groundwork for later educational achievement.

Scholastic is providing "Prescription" coupons to pediatricians across the country. The coupons can be redeemed for a free copy of *Read to Your Bunny*, by Rosemary Wells, at a bookstore participating in the program. Along with the coupons, parents will receive a brochure about how best to read with their children.

The Children's Book Council Web site lists these suggestions on how schools and families can celebrate Book Week in your community:

- **Dress up as Children's Book Characters.** Put on plays, visit the auditorium or study hall during study periods, make a surprise appearance in the library.
- **Have a Poetry Festival.** Each child can bring in and read a favorite poem, or create one of his/her own.
- **Hold a Story Writing Contest.** Can be done at the classroom level, or sponsored by the principal or library.
- **Institute Amnesty for Overdue Library Books.** Best excuse wins a prize!
- **Assign Arts and Crafts Projects.** Have the kids make their own bookmarks, banners, quilts, posters, maybe even a book.
- **Start a Promotion and Publicity Course.** Everyone can write ads promoting reading and Book Week that can be announced over the public address system, published in the school newspaper or magazine, or aired by a local radio station.
- **Book Sharing.** Opportunities for sharing are limitless, and what a great way to enjoy reading and

books! Here are some ideas:

- -- book fairs and auctions
- -- read-alouds
- -- class discussions
- -- book-swapping
- -- reading with the family
- -- book raffles
- -- sleepover read-a-thons
- -- story hours
- -- book debates
- -- reading with a friend

Other Interesting and Unusual Ideas (also from the Children's Book Council Web site)

- **Launch a Treasure Hunt.** A good activity to organize in homeroom; the teacher writes and hides "literary" clues for the kids to find.
- **Have an Annual Week of NO TV!** Sign a pledge, wear a button, carry a sign: during Book Week, reading only, please.
- **Put on a Magic Show.** Kids love magic, and the props can be things mentioned in a favorite book.
- **Celebrate Books and Authors.** Study an author a day, have an author birthday party, pick a favorite book to discuss for the week, arrange for a local author to visit.
- **Organize Games.** Play book trivia question-and-answer, create book crossword puzzles, have clues read over the public address system and play "Name That Book."
- **Choose a Library or Class Mascot.** A stuffed toy, a kid (selected by the teacher, or kids can take turns) dressed in a favorite book character's costume, or even the school principal as mascot-of-the-week...Whatever you do, NOT a live animal, please!
- **Take Field Trips.** Visit local literary landmarks, the library, a bookstore, or attend a college literature class.
- **Hold a Cooking Fest.** In home economics class at school, or at home, have fun making food from stories, like Dr. Seuss's Green Eggs & Ham.
- **Invite an Unusual Visitor.** A person from a different country or culture can introduce kids to her/his culture using costumes, literature, and song; an environmentalist can discuss the importance of being "green" using books; biographers can explain what makes them choose a particular subject.

For further information:

Children's Book Council. (1997). *National Children's Book Week* [Online]. Available: http://www.cbcbooks.org/pubs/bwtips.htm [1997, October 20].

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Parent News for November 1997

Of Interest

Children's Books

The ERIC system offers documents called "Information Guides" on a broad range of topics related to education. Of relevance to children's literature is an ERIC Info Guide called "Children's Literature" written by Sue A. Clary in 1994. This online info guide contains links to many Web sites about children's literature. It is available online at:

http://ericir.syr.edu/cgi-bin/markup_infoguides/Alphabetical_List_of_InfoGuides/Children's_Lit-11.95

Following is a list of children's books related to the following topics: Homework, Internet, and Books Featuring African-American Children.

Homework

The Berenstain Bears and the Homework Hassle (Berenstain Bears First Time Books) by Stan and Jan Berenstain (Published in 1997 by Random House).

A Bumpy Ate My Homework by Eleanor Hudson (Published in 1995 by Random House).

My Dog Ate It by Saragail Katzman Benjamin (Published in 1996 by Apple).

Surviving Homework: Tips from Teens by Amy Nathan (Published in 1996 by Millbrook Press).

Aaugh, a Dog Ate My Book Report (Peanuts Gang) by Charles M. Schulz (Published in 1998 by Harpercollins Juvenile Books).

Buster Bunny in the Great Homework Chase (Tiny Toon Adventures Storybooks) (Published in 1990 by Book Sales).

Internet

The Family PC Guide to Homework by Gregg Keizer (Published in 1996 by Hyperion).

Internet Homework Helper edited by Tim McLain (Published in1996 by Prentice-Hall).

Kids, Computers, & Homework: How You and Your Kids Can Make Schoolwork a Learning Adventure! by Diane Kendall and Jim Lengel (Published in 1995 by Random House).

Books Featuring African-American Children

Afro-Bets 1 2 3 Books by Cheryl Willis Hudson (Published in 1988 by Just Us Books).

Bein' with You This Way by W. Nikola-Lisa (Published in 1996 by Lee and Low).

Grandpa's Face by Eloise Greenfield (Published in 1988 by Philomel).

Honey, I Love, and Other Poems by Eloise Greenfield (Published in 1987 by Harper Crest).

Joshua by Dakari Hru (Published in 1997 by Lee and Low).

Saturday at the New You by Barbara E. Barber (Published in 1997 by Lee and Low).

Smoky Night by Eve Bunting (Published in 1994 by Harcourt).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

Exercise with Daddy and Me **by Corinne L. Becker**

You've probably heard of moms exercising together; but what about dads exercising with their babies? This video was created for dads who want to participate more in their baby's childhood experience. It helps a new dad feel more comfortable with his baby through a workout as well as spending one-on-one time together. In addition, the viewing dad will learn from other new fathers during a group discussion facilitated by a pediatrician. Cost $19.03. For more information:

Corinne L. Becker, R.N.
1689 N. Hiatus Rd., Suite 173
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026
Telephone: 305-919-2541

I Am Your Child, **Hosted by Rob Reiner**

The Johnson & Johnson Foundation, IBM, and Price Waterhouse collaborated to develop the *I Am Your Child* video. Topics covered include attributes of a newborn, stages of newborn and early child development, and techniques that parents and care givers can use to encourage their young child's play and development. For more information:

Elizabeth Spencer
Reiner Foundation
1010 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Suite 800
Washington DC 20007
Telephone: 202-338-4385

***Learning Partners: Families Get Involved*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, DC.**

Noting that families who are involved in their children's education make a difference in their child's performance, this two-page information sheet encourages families to get involved by listing the benefits of family involvement on one side and the ways adult family members can help in the school on the other. For more information:

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5720
Telephone: 202-219-22889

Curriculum for Parents 1997-1998: Catholic School Version. Grade 1.

Parental involvement is critical to a child's success in school. This handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 1 curriculum in Catholic schools in Alberta, Canada. Based on the Alberta Education "Program of Studies: Elementary Schools," the handbook describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes Catholic school students in Alberta are expected to demonstrate when they have completed the Grade 1 curriculum, including samples of what students are expected to learn in each subject. For more information:

Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton
Learning Resources Distributing Centre
12360-142 St.
Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9 Canada
Telephone: 403-427-2767
Fax: 403-422-9750
Internet: http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Gabel, Katherine (Ed.); Johnston, Denise (Ed.). (1995). ***Children of Incarcerated Parents.*** **Jossey-Bass Inc., 350 Samsome St., San Francisco, CA 94101; telephone: 800-956-7739; fax: 800-605-2665 ($30).**

The arrest and imprisonment of a parent is significant trauma for children, and children of incarcerated parents are at high risk for juvenile delinquency. This book for social workers, psychologists, and others who work with children whose parents are incarcerated examines parental incarceration, its impact on children, care and placement of prisoners' children, legal and policy issues, and intervention programs. The chapters are: (1) "Incarcerated Parents" (Denise Johnston; Katherine Gabel); (2) "Imprisoned Mothers" (Barbara Bloom); (3) "Fathers in Prison" (Creasie Finney Hairston); (4) "Jailed Mothers" (Denise Johnston); (5) "Effects of Parental Incarceration" (Denise Johnston); (6) "Post-Traumatic Stress Reactions in Children of Imprisoned Mothers" (Christina Jose Kampfner); (7) "The Care and Placement of Prisoners' Children" (Denise Johnston); (8) "Children of Prisoners in Foster Care (Julie Norman); (9) "Parent-Child Visitation in the Jail or Prison" (Denise Johnston); (10) "Legal Issues for Prisoners with Children" (Ellen Barry, River Ginchild, and Doreen Lee); (11) "Termination of Parental Rights among Prisoners: A National Perspective" (Philip Genty); (12) "Practical Considerations Regarding Termination of Incarcerated Parents' Rights" (Gail Smith); (13) "Intervention" (Denise Johnston); (14) "Long-Term Care Nurseries in Prisons: A Descriptive Study" (Katherine Gabel and Kathryn Girard); (15) "The Prison MATCH Program" (Rose Weilerstein); (16) "A Program for Grandparent Caregivers" (Leonora Poe); (17) "Public Policy and the Children of Incarcerated Parents" (Barbara Bloom); (18) "Child Welfare System Policies and the Children of Incarcerated Parents" (Shirley Marcus); (19) "Advocacy Efforts on Behalf of the Children of Incarcerated Parents" (Peter Breen); and (20) "Alternative to Women's Incarceration" (Meda Chesney-Lind and Russ Immarigeon). Each chapter contains references. PS025839

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2. Ferri, Elsa; Smith, Kate. (1996). ***Parenting in the 1990s.*** **Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker St., London, NW1 6XE, England, United Kingdom; telephone: 0171-486-8179; fax: 0171-224-3510.**

This study examined family formation, employment, child-care arrangements, parenting, family activities, and attitudes and values of British parents. Subjects were nearly 6,000 British 33-year-old married parents, originally subjects in the longitudinal National Child Development Study, which traced the lives of all those in Great Britain born in a specific week in 1958. Findings of the current study revealed wide disparities in income levels and time available for family life. Couples in which both spouses were employed full-time tended to be better qualified and have higher status occupations than couples in which both were unemployed. The most egalitarian parenting and domestic arrangements were found in households in which both parents were employed full-time; nevertheless, women retained disproportionate responsibility for child care, child-rearing, and domestic work. Heavy paternal work commitments discouraged equal parenting. The majority of parents appeared highly contented with their marriages and their lives in general. Parents in traditional families were marginally the most satisfied. There was a sizable minority of parents who were not happy with their marriage or their overall lives, and a smaller group who indicated psychological distress. For mothers, the key factor in these outcomes was their partner's contribution to family life and parenting. For fathers, their parenting role had little bearing on their marital happiness, general life satisfaction, or emotional state. There was some evidence that fathers who were playing an equal part in child care were the least content. PS025806

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3. *Mister Rogers' Plan and Play Book: Activities from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood for Parents and Child Care Providers.* (Fourth Ed.). (1995). Family Communications, Inc., 4802 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213; telephone: 412-687-2990; fax: 412-687-1226.

Intended for both child care professionals and parents, this book lists activities from episodes of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* television program, and can be used with or without watching the program. Each activity is assigned a number that corresponds to the television episode in which the activity is featured, and a national PBS Broadcast schedule is provided that allows users to determine what will be featured on a daily basis. This book includes activities from programs 1001 through 1685, with the individual activities organized by week. At the beginning of each week's activities are thoughts for the week's programs and a listing of featured songs. Each day's activities begin with the goals of the day's work and what the day's work can help children learn. A listing of required materials is also provided. The activities are fully explained, and further questions and areas of investigation are suggested. Several appendices include recipes for homemade modeling dough, toothpaste, finger paint, and pastes. Directions for play props, children's food recipes, and a listing of songs and their lyrics are also included. The book contains a full index to assist users in locating specific types of activities. PS025593

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4. Dombro, Amy Laura; and others. (1996). *Community Mobilization: Strategies to Support Young Children and Their Families.* Families and Work Institute, Attn: Publications Order, 320 Seventh Ave., 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001; telephone: 212-465-2044; fax: 212-465-8637; Internet: www.familiesandwork.org ($25, plus $3.50 shipping; in Canada, add $2 (U.S. funds) additional shipping. Major credit cards accepted. All orders must be pre-paid).

Noting the increasing need for public officials, practitioners, business leaders, concerned citizens, and parents to work together to improve the quality of life for young children and families, this book for community organizations provides information needed to begin or enhance local or statewide community mobilization efforts. Included are descriptions of initiatives based on information gathered through interviews with staff conducted over a 3-year period. The book begins with a definition of community mobilization, its principles, and the origins and stages of community mobilization efforts. The remaining sections detail the three stages of community mobilization, using a question-answer format, and including information from specific initiatives to illustrate particular points. Section 1, "Creating a Vision: Promising Practices," contains chapters on getting started, assessing needs, mobilizing the voice of parents, and involving businesses. Section 2, "Implementing the Vision: Creating Quality Services for Young Children and Their Families," includes chapters on reforming communities to serve families of young children through coordinating services, systemic planning and reform, and institutionalizing integrated services. Also included in this section are chapters on improving and assuring the quality of services through promoting professional development of the early education and care practitioner, involving parents, improving state regulations, promoting accreditation of early childhood practitioners, and improving the compensation of the child care workforce. Section 3, "Sustaining the Vision: Assuring Lasting Change," addresses maintaining momentum, developing financing mechanisms, engaging the public, and assessing results. Each chapter contains references. Two appendices detail state initiatives and describe national organizations. PS025180

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5. Jones, Raya A. (1995). ***The Child-School Interface: Environment and Behaviour.*** **Cassell/Books International, P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA 20172-0605; telephone: 703-435-7064; fax: 703-689-0660 ($31.95).**

This book reviews research and theories concerning environment-behavior relations in educational settings. Chapter 1, "The Ecosystemic Metaphor," presents the school as a an open system, considers psychological theories of human behavior, and defines the environment. Chapter 2, "The Behaviour Setting," looks at relations between actual place and behavior, focusing on the spatial environment of schools and classrooms and evaluating Barker's ecological psychological theory. Chapter 3, "The Direct Environment," considers the "organism-environment fit" as applied to the child-school interface, including the effects of noise, temperature, and light, and Gibson's and Lewin's perceptual theories. Chapter 4, "Organizational Ethos," examines relations between the organizational environment and pupil performance, especially the use of survey methods to probe students' perception of the school environment. Chapter 5, "The Social Niche (1): Teacher-Pupil Relationships," discusses characteristics of the social environment, including teacher-student relationships, effects of teachers' attitudes and expectations, classroom communication as related to child-centered practices, and using an ecosystemic approach to behavior problems. Chapter 6, "The Social Niche (2): Pupil-Pupil Relationships," examines peer relationships, focusing on the conflation between the environment children create for each other and the adult-directed environment structured by the school. Chapter 7, "A Child at School," uses Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Kelly's personal construct theory to explore children's private worlds. Chapter 8, "Problems of Adjustment," reviews ways in with adjustment problems have been approached in British special education. Chapter 9, "Living Child, Whole School," outlines general conclusions regarding research and theories about the child-school interface. (Each chapter contains notes and references.) PS025754

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Character Education Partnership

The Character Education Partnership (CEP), founded in 1992, is dedicated to developing civic virtue and moral character in America's children, as a step towards creating a more compassionate and responsible society. An information packet is available that includes an introduction to character education and a bibliography of books, articles, journals, magazines, and newsletters about character education.

Contact

Character Education Partnership
809 Franklin St.
Alexandra, VA
Telephone: 703-739-9515
Fax: 703-739-4967

Educators for Social Responsibility

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) is a private, nonprofit organization that has developed many materials for use by parents and educators. Among them is the "Peaceable Classroom and School Program" for schools having difficulties with violence in the classroom and school environment. ESR offers books, videos, and curricula and training on conflict resolution, violence prevention, character education, diversity education, and social responsibility.

Contact

Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
Telephone: 800-370-2515
Fax: 617-864-5164

Outward Bound

Outward Bound has been existence in England and the United States since the early 1960s. The organization offers courses to help students develop traits such as commitment, cooperation, honesty, and generosity.

Contact

Outward Bound National Office
Route 9D-R2, Box 280
Garrison, NY 10524
Telephone: 800-243-2141

National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

The National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS) is committed to local control of education, in which parents, students, and community individuals work together on developing and opening a school that fits the needs of their community. The coalition sponsors conferences, publishes a newsletter called *National Coalition News*, and publishes a directory of alternative schools.

Contact

National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools
P.O. Box 15036
Santa Fe, NM 87506
Telephone: 505-474-4312

Pathfinder

Pathfinder emphasizes the developmental needs of children at each stage of their lives. Pathfinder has developed a child-rearing program based on the work of noted authorities such as Piaget and Gesell, called "Natural Learning Rhythms," which can be used by parents and educators working with children at any age.

Contact

Pathfinder
11011 Tyler Foote Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95959-9309

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters

Education Station

Published monthly by Precious Ink Publications, *Education Station* contains informative articles on parenting and parental involvement in their children's education. The focus on the newsletter is to enhance the lives of children and their families. Current articles include topics such as self-esteem, succeeding in school, science and math activities, and bullying. Cost: $19.95 per year. For more information:

Precious Ink Publications
P.O. Box 2735
Lake City, FL 32056
Telephone: 888-634-9446

Speak Out for Children

Speak Out for Children is the quarterly newsletter of the Children's Rights Council (CRC), which is concerned with the healthy development of children of divorced and separated parents. The newsletter consists of feature articles and regular sections and columns. For more information:

Children's Rights Council, Inc.
220 "I" St. NE, Suite 20
Washington, DC 20002-4362
Telephone: 202-547-6227

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Prevention Online

Sponsor: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

Description: This site offers electronic access to searchable databases and substance abuse prevention materials on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Features include: (1) Resources and Referrals, (2) Research and Statistics, (3) Searchable Databases, (4) Publications, (5) Online Forums, (6) Calendar, and (7) Links to related sites.

Address: http://www.health.org/

Name: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Network Information Home Site

Description: This Web site for the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Network, Inc., contains information for individuals who have experienced the loss of a child through SIDS, miscarriage, or stillbirth. In addition to information about grieving and dealing with the loss, the site includes articles discussing what SIDS is, facts about SIDS, how parents can reduce the risk of SIDS, FAQs about SIDS, updates on SIDS research, and first-person stories written by those who have been touched by SIDS. The SIDS Network, Inc., maintains two listservs: one on SIDS, the other on pregnancy and infant loss. A resource section is provided that includes books, videos, and other resources. Some material on the site is available in other languages (Spanish, French, German).

Address: http://www.sids-network.org/

Name: SpeciaLink: The National Child Care Inclusion Network

Description: SpeciaLink is a resource and research help line that provides personalized responses to specific questions, referrals to other organizations, and sources of help, information, and technical assistance. It also provides the *SpeciaLink* newsletter, fact sheets, books and videos, and a speaker's bureau. The goal of SpeciaLink is to expand the quality and quantity of opportunities for inclusion in child care, recreation, education, and other community settings to young children with special needs and their families.

Address:http://highlander.cbnet.ns.ca/~specialink/

Name of Site: Whole Family Center

Description: The Whole Family Center was designed for parents both to receive and give pertinent information on children and parents. It is an interactive site with programs (vignettes and learning activities) in three centers: (1) the Parent Center, (2) the Marital Center, and (3) the Kid/Teen Center. Each center has real-life dramas that users can follow. The site provides: (1) an online magazine, (2) a library of resources, (3) evaluations (some provided free of charge), (4) discussion groups, and (5) referrals for a nominal fee.

Address: http://www.wholefamily.com

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for November 1997

Resources for Parents

The Parenting Calendar

Conference: Family Group Decision-Making

Date: November 3-4, 1997

Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Description: This roundtable is designed to increase participant knowledge about the dynamics of family group decision making and its potential for reforming the child and family services system, as well as the juvenile and family court systems. It will provide participants with successful strategies for addressing the challenges of implementing family group decision making within various child and family systems.

Contact:

Mickey Shumaker
Telephone: 303-792-9900
Email: mickey@amerhumane.org.

Conference: 11th Annual Technology and Learning Conference

Date: November 5-7, 1997

Place: Denver, Colorado

Description: Over 20 education organizations have joined the National School Boards Association Institute to give you a "glimpse of the future of education." Participants will see for themselves how technology can "reshape tomorrow's classrooms."

Contact:

NSBA Registrar
P.O. Box 1807
Merrifield, VA 22116-8007
Telephone: 800-950-6722
Fax: 703-548-5560, Attn: Registrar

Conference: Approaches to Developmental Learning Disorders in Infants and Children

Date: November 14-16, 1997

Place: Rockville, Maryland

Description: The Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders is sponsoring the "Approaches to Developmental Learning Disorders in Infants and Children" conference.

Contact:

Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders
Telephone: 301-656-2667

Conference: 1997 SIDS Alliance National Conference

Date: November 15-17, 1997

Place: Dallas, Texas

Description: This annual conference is sponsored by SIDS Alliance, a nonprofit, national health organization devoted to eliminating SIDS through education and research.

Contact:

SIDS Alliance
Telephone: 800-221-7437

Conference: Education: A Community Affair

Date: December 3-6, 1997

Place: Hyatt Regency, Phoenix, Arizona

Description: This conference, sponsored by the National Community Education Association, is intended for school administrators, state education officials, parents, and other school personnel.

Contact:

Ursula Ellis, Diane Jurtz, or Starla Jewell-Kelly
NCEA
3929 Old Lee Highway
Suite 91-A
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401
Telephone: 703-359-8973

Fax: 703-359-0972
Email: ncea@ncea.com

Conference: Southern Regional Rally—Children, Youth and Families

Sponsor: Cooperative Extension's National Network for Child Care

Date: January 25-27, 1998

Place: Ramada Inn Resort Maingate, Kissimmee, Florida

Description: Conference workshops will be presented in the context of child care issues as they relate to welfare reform, parent education/involvement, work force preparation, diversity, evaluation, and family, center-based, and school-aged child care.

Contact:

Manola Erby
National Network for Child Care
Alcorn State University
1000 ASU Drive #479
Lorman, MS 39096
Fax: 601-877-6694
Email: mcerby@lorman.alcorn.edu

Return to the Parent News for November 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

NPIN
National Parent Information Network

Parent News for December 1997

Volume 3, Number 12

- What's New on NPIN
- December's Feature:
  Child Care Issues Receive National Attention in 1997
  by Dawn Ramsburg
- Community Spotlight:
  Family Gatherings
- Of Interest:
  - *To Spank or Not to Spank: A Panel Discussion*
  - *Equity and Young Children as Learners: Highlight's of Barbara Bowman's Speech at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference*
  - *CPSC Findings Differ from Greenpeace Report Findings on Lead in Children's Vinyl Products*
  - *Holiday Safety*
  - *Schools and Communities: Looking beyond the Classroom*
  - *Children's Books*
- Resources for Parents
  - Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets
  - Book Summaries and Reviews
  - Organizations
  - Newsletters/Magazines
  - Web Sites
  - The Parenting Calendar

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NOTE: Editorial Changes, December 18, 1997: (1) The article *Children's Books* was added in the "Of Interest" section; and (2) a paragraph on holiday memories from the Southwest was added in the *Family Gatherings* article.

Parent News Editorial Information

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Editor: Laurel Preece
NPIN Coordinator: Anne Robertson

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Return to the Parent News introductory page.
Return to the NPIN home page.
Artwork by Andrea Shields.
Send comments to NPIN Webmaster

Parent News for December 1997

What's New on NPIN

For a listing and description of items that are new on NPIN over the last three months, see the What's New on NPIN section on the NPIN Home Page.

What's New: Resources added to NPIN during November 1997

Several new items have been added to several topical areas in the Resources for Parents / Full Text of Parenting-Related Materials section.

In the Assessment and Testing section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *Math and the myth of 1,2,3*
  The article includes ways to get your child to think about numbers and to really learn math.

In the Early Childhood: Learning section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *El Reto: !A Leer, América!*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- *Math and the myth of 1,2,3*
  The article includes ways to get your child to think about numbers and to really learn math.
- *Exploring the weather: A fun way to learn*
  This article includes the description of many fun ways for your child to learn about the weather.

In the Helping Your Child Learn at Home section, additional contents to the following resources have been added:

- *El Reto: !A Leer, América!*
  This booklet for families of children from birth through age five was developed by the AmeriCorps Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center as a project of the Corporation for National Service; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the Parents and Families in Society section, the following resources have been added:

- *Young and old together*

Many young children have misconceptions about older people. This articles list the goals and benefits of intergenerational curricula.

- *Celebrating holidays in early childhood programs*
  Here are some signs of good practice in celebrating holidays
- *Tips for holiday toy-choosing*
  Listed in this article are tips for holiday toy-choosing

Reviews or summaries of the following parenting-related books were added to the Parenting Resources: Books section of NPIN:

- *Children of Incarcerated Parents* by Katherine Gabel
- *Parenting in the 1990s* by Elsa Ferri and Kate Smith
- *Mister Rogers' Plan and Play Book: Activities from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood for Parents and Child Care Providers.*
- *Community Mobilization: Strategies to Support Young Children and Their Families* by Amy Laura Dombro
- *The Child-School Interface: Environment and Behaviour* by Raya Jones

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Information on the following parenting-related organizations was added to the Resources for Those Who Work with Parents: Organizations section of NPIN:

- Character Education Partnership
- Educators for Social Responsibility
- Outward Bound
- National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools
- Pathfinder

Information on the following parenting-related newsletters was added to the Parenting Resources: Newsletters section of NPIN:

- *Education Station*
- *Speak Out for Children*

Several new links to Internet resources were added in the Internet Resources for Parents and Those Who Work with Parents section.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

December's Feature

Child Care Issues Receive National Attention in 1997

by Dawn Ramsburg

This has been an interesting year for anyone interested in the well-being of young children, and particularly for those of us involved in child care. From the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning in April, which highlighted brain development research and its implications for parents, teachers, and caregivers, to the White House Conference on Child Care in October, the media, politicians, and many parents and caregivers have focused their attention on the importance of the early years in children's development. This attention is beginning to broaden the discussion around child care from a debate over whether mothers should work outside the home to a dialog about the importance of ensuring that children are receiving high-quality care from caregivers both inside and outside the home.

Despite positive media attention, this year has not been without its challenges. On July 1, the welfare reform legislation that was passed last summer went into effect, starting the five-year clock for families receiving cash assistance. As many as 4 million low-income parents must get jobs over the next few years under welfare reform (Greenburg, 1997). They will place increased demand on a child care system already known to be inadequate for families needing care for infants or school-age children, children with special needs, and children in rural areas (Hofferth, 1996). The shortage of high-quality child care often leaves many parents in a "take it or leave it" situation in which there are few alternatives to placing their children in poor-quality care.

This situation is often compounded by the high rate of child care provider turnover; as many as one-third of child care providers leave their jobs every year (Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). This turnover rate is attributed to the low wages earned by most child care providers (an average of $12,000 a year with few or no benefits). This high rate of turnover is "damaging to young children who need stable and consistent caregiving" (Shalala, 1997).

Finally, the recent trial of the au pair in Massachusetts reminds us of how important it is for parents to have the knowledge and skills to carefully evaluate their child care options and choose a stable, attentive provider who meets their familyís needs. Yet research reveals that many parents feel isolated when looking for child care and usually do not know how to identify high-quality child care, at least at the beginning of their search (Fogerty, 1997). Consumer education efforts are critical to improving access to high-quality, affordable child care.

The purpose of this article is to (1) present a summary of key child care facts, (2) describe some highlights from the White House Conference on Child Care, and (3) offer a listing of resources related to child care issues.

Summary of Key Child Care Facts

Demographics

- In 1995, three out of five (62%) of women with children under 6, and three-fourths (77%) of women with children ages 6 to 17, were in the labor force. In addition, growing numbers of women with children under 3 are in the work forceó59% (Childrenís Defense Fund, 1997).
- Women who work often play a major role in supporting their families financially. A 1995 study revealed that 55% of the single mothers interviewed contributed half or more of their household income (18% contributed all, 11% contributed more than half, and 26% contributed half). Fully 48% of employed women in married couples were found to contribute half or more of their household income (Families and Work Institute, 1995).
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 1995 there were approximately 21 million infants, toddlers, and preschool children under age 6 in the United States; more than 12.9 million of these children were in child care.

Affordability

- Child care is a major household expense for working families. Full-day care for one child costs $4,000-$10,000 per yearóequal to what families pay for college tuition plus room and board at a public university (ChildrenÕs Defense Fund, 1997).
- Families with annual incomes under $14,400 who paid for care for children under age 5 spent 25% of their income on child care, compared with 6% for families with incomes of $54,000 or more (Casper, 1995).

Quality

- Higher quality care for very young children (0-3 years) was found to be consistently related to high levels of cognitive and language development (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997).
- A four-state study of quality in child care centers found only one in seven (14%) were rated as good quality (Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995).
- Thirteen percent of regulated and 50% of nonregulated family child care providers offer care that is inadequate (Families and Work Institute, 1994).
- Many children living in poverty receive child care that, at best, does not support their optimal development and that, at worst, may compromise their health and safety (National Research Council, 1995).

Highlights of the White House Conference on Child Care

On October 23, 1997, the President and First Lady hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Child Care. This day-long conference brought together early childhood practitioners, researchers, parents, advocates, business leaders, and policymakers to address issues of availability, affordability, safety, and quality in child care.

The morning panel, moderated by the President and First Lady, was called, ìThe Challenge: Availability, Affordability, and Assuring Safety and Quality in Child Care.Ó The afternoon session, hosted by Vice President Al Gore and with remarks by Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, was called, "Learning from What Works."

In her opening remarks, the First Lady outlined the problems faced by millions of working families in taking care of their children. Mrs. Clinton stated, "There are many who are wondering whether they would get better quality care if they could pay more money. Others are struggling to determine how they'll be able to afford next month's payment. And there are many who are in the work force who worry every day about how they'll care for their child and hold down the job that they need. Many parents will go to work, but have trouble focusing on work because they are worried about the sniffle their daughter had or wondering how their son is faring."

Mrs. Clinton noted that the purpose of the conference was to start a conversation to improve child care in America. She indicated that the aim was not to create a "one-size-fits-all child care," since that would not meet the variety of needs of America's families. Instead, she wants to ensure that parents have options—child care options as well as affordable options for remaining at home with their children if they choose."

She ended by stating, "we want American parents to succeed at the most important task they have, caring for the next generation, and to be good workers who contribute to the economy and the quality of life that we enjoy in our country."

The President stated that the reason he supported such a conference and the efforts to improve child care was because "all parents should be able to succeed at home and at work and that every child counts. No parent should ever have to choose between work and family, between earning a decent wage and caring for a child."

To help in meeting this goal, he announced four immediate actions:

· **National Child Care Provider Scholarship Fund.** In an effort to raise training levels and salaries, the President proposed a scholarship fund to give more than $300 million over a period of five years to 50,000 child care providers annually. If approved by Congress, individual scholarships of up to $1,500 will be available to current and future child care providers working towards a state or national credential, certificate, or undergraduate degree, and who agree to remain in the field for at least one year after receiving assistance. While not limited to those eligible for Pell grants, the scholarship will build on Pell eligibility by covering costs not covered by the grant, including tuition and fees, books, supplies, transportation, and child care. Outreach efforts have been made jointly by the Secretaries of Education and Health and Human Services to make child care providers aware of the financial assistance currently available.

· **National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact**. Although the majority of child care workers are law-abiding citizens, background checks provide some assurance that those caring for children are fit for the responsibility. President Clinton has transmitted a compact to Congress to facilitate effective background checks on child care providers by eliminating state law barriers to the sharing of criminal history information for purposes other than ongoing criminal investigations. Currently, child care agencies are unable to access information from all states' records, but must request criminal histories from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). FBI records are not as complete as individual state records because state reporting of criminal dispositions to the Bureau is done on a voluntary basis.

· **Working Group on Child Care**. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin will oversee a working group on child care, composed primarily of business leaders. The group will work with labor and community representatives to find ways more businesses can provide child care or help their employees afford high-quality child care.

· **Service as a Strategy in After-School Programs**. To assist communities in enriching their after-school programs, the President proposed a public-private partnership entitled "To Learn and Grow Initiative."

Administered by the Corporation for National Service, the partnership is dedicated to expanding access to and enhancing the quality of after-school programs through volunteer service. The initiative will release a "How-To" manual and will provide training and technical assistance to programs wishing to use national service and volunteers to help meet their needs.

Panelists repeatedly reported on the complex trade-offs between improving quality and improving affordability, but continued to point out the need to effectively address both issues. This issue is one of the deepest dilemmas in child care. Parents cite the cost of care as one of their biggest concerns. At the same time, child care professionals are seeking higher pay for workers, higher quality, and stricter regulations, whichóin the absence of more investments by government or businessócould lead to increased costs for working parents (Pear, 1997).

Other broad themes addressed included the need for the entire community to get involved in supporting better quality and more accessible care, the critical need for public and private partnerships, and the need for more resources (from federal, state, and local government as well as the private sector) to improve child care quality and availability.

Thousands of participants from across the country accessed the proceedings of the White House Conference on Child Care via satellite downlink. Joan Lombardi, Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau, described the conference as "a special day for all of us, especially for working families who depend on child care everyday and for the providers who work to meet the needs of the children in their care."

Resources Related to Child Care

In addition to your local child care resource and referral agency (CCR&R) (call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 if you do not know about your local CCR&R), there are numerous Internet resources that provide child care information.

ACF Child Care Bureau
The Child Care Bureau is dedicated to enhancing the quality, affordability, and supply of child care available for all families. The Child Care Bureau administers federal funds to states, territories, and tribes to assist low-income families in accessing high-quality child care for children while parents work or participate in education or training. The Child Care Bureau is part of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Child Care Aware
Child Care Aware is a nationwide campaign that trains child care providers, educates parents on identifying high-quality child care, and helps parents seek high-quality child care in their communities.

Children's Defense Fund
In addition to numerous publications, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) has several child care resources online. CDF works with individuals and groups across the country who are concerned about children on a major campaign to improve the quality and affordability of child care at the federal, state, and local levels in 1998.

Department of Defense Child Development System
This site offers background information about the military's child care programs.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals and others dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood education programs for children birth through age 8.

National Association for Family Child Care
The focus of the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) is to provide technical assistance to family child care associations. This assistance is provided through developing leadership and professionalism, addressing issues of diversity, and by promoting quality and professionalism through NAFCC's Family Child Care Accreditation.

National Child Care Information Center
The National Child Care Information Center has been established to complement, enhance, and promote child care linkages and to serve as a mechanism for supporting high-quality, comprehensive services for children and families.

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
The National Institute on Out-of-School Time's mission is to improve the quantity and quality of school-age care programs nationally by concentrating on five primary areas: research, education and training, consultation, program and community development, and public awareness.

National Network for Child Care
The National Network for Child Care unites the expertise of many of the nation's leading universities through the outreach system of Cooperative Extension. Their goal is to share knowledge about children and child care from the vast resources of the land-grant universities with parents, professionals, practitioners, and the general public.

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care
The National Resource Center's primary mission is to promote health and safety in out-of-home child care settings throughout the nation.

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Special thanks to the National Child Care Information Center for the Child Care Bulletin Special Issue on the White House Conference on Child Care.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Community Spotlight

Family Gatherings

Last year, at this time, we asked our Parenting-L listserv to share some of their memories about holidays and family gatherings. The article was so well received that we decided to add some more memories and run it again. We hope that you enjoy the article, and we wish you the very best during this holiday season.

During the next few months, people around the world will begin planning their holiday festivities. Fall harvest festivals culminate in Thanksgiving in the United States. The winter brings celebrations such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's Day, and Chinese New Year.

These festivities give us time to pause from routines and gather with our community of friends and family. We may celebrate our faith, our new hope for the new year, or simply the closure of another year that we survived.

Recently, we asked our PARENTING-L listserv members how they view these family gatherings and celebrations. The PARENTING-L listserv is supported by the National Parent Information Network and discusses many issues related to parenting, family life, and education. The members' responses are summarized below.

From Israel, we received the following:

"At the moment we live in Israel, so family gatherings are kind of hard to get to. When I was a kid, we used to get together with aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents for all the Jewish holidays. The activities we planned were based on the holiday itself and its religious traditions. Being in Israel, my kids are learning the traditional aspects of the holidays more in depth than I ever did. However, they do lose out on the family part of it. Whereas most people spend the holidays with their extended family, my kids don't have that opportunity. We have a surrogate family here that we usually spend the holidays with, so hopefully that helps."

Many families are separated by distance but develop methods of getting together. We hear from the United States:

"We usually have several Christmases, and we're lucky if any of them are on Christmas Day! My parents live 500 miles away, my sister lives 2500 miles away. Usually we trade the drive to visit with my parents over Christmas weekend or New Year's Day. I find that now that I have a child it is more important to me to attend these things and connect with family."

Other families live closer to extended family and will spend one evening at one grandparent's home and the next day at another grandparent's home:

"We're very lucky to live 20 minutes from one grandmother and 60 minutes from the other, plus two uncles and an aunt. And our kids are the only ones in the area. As a result, we've used family for sitters. I am glad the kids can get close to their extended family. Our holiday foods are traditional. Every New Year's Day we drive 2-1/2 hours to spend the day with my mother's cousin and eat beans to give us luck for the New Year."

From Maine, we hear that one family usually has a white Christmas as well as important traditions:

"My father plays Santa and passes out the gifts, rotating the recipient. This allows everyone to enjoy the holiday and what we all receive and who gave it...it's not rushed! We are a Catholic family so we go to mass on Christmas Eve."

Some families have developed a tradition of helping others. For example:

"During the Christmas season, we collect food for our church food drive, and Matthew picks out two toys at the store to give to the local Toys for Tots Program. We have been trying to teach Matthew that we need to help people who aren't as lucky as we are. Also, we are lucky that our parents live 1-1/2 hours from us and my grandparents 2-1/2 hours away, so we can visit fairly frequently."

Others simply remember the childhood excitement of gift-giving and being together:

"I guess my holiday memories would be from when I still believed in Santa Claus. My family lived in a 37-story apartment building, and I always wanted to know how Santa delivered his gifts because we didn't have a chimney. They told me that he landed his sleigh on the deck between the two buildings. On Christmas Eve, I would watch the 10 o'clock news with my parents. In the weather segment, the weatherman would say that they just saw Santa on the radar and that he was coming in for a landing. I would promptly jump out of my seat and hide under the bed covers."

"My recent memories involve marrying into my wife's large family—went from 0 nephews and nieces to 10! Have enjoyed the larger gatherings and family feelings, and especially find the prayer before the meal to be touching. This year's Thanksgiving featured my niece, Candice, giving a nice summary of the trials the family went through this year while offering hope for the future and thanks for the good things in the present, while everybody held hands. My sister-in-law told everybody Candice would lead the prayer this year (first time the next generation has done this, I think), and was crying even before she started. Candice was assured that she will have to lead the prayer from now on—she did too good of a job!"

From the Southwest we hear:

On Christmas Eve, we all gather at my parent's home at Nambe Pueblo, in the northern part of New Mexico. Just after dark, some of the family leaves to hike up a small hill a few miles from the house. On top of the hill, they light a huge bonfire that will help Santa get his bearings and find the house where we are all gathered. When the bonfire lighters return, we eat a dinner that includes traditional Indian foods: posole and chili. After dinner, we gather around a small bonfire in the yard to sing carols and wait for Santa. As we sing, we listen for the jingle of his bells. As he walks up from behind the cedar trees, the children run to him and bring him to the fire. He tells us of his travels, and then we go inside where he distributes gifts to all the children. We sing one more carol, Santa leaves, and the kids joyfully begin unwrapping their gifts.

From the Midwest we hear:

"Some of my fondest childhood holiday memories are of family gatherings at my grandparent's farm. We usually had 20 or more children and adults, and the children spent most of their time playing in the barns, woods, or creeks. My grandfather would "walk the woods" with the grandchildren pointing out various unique finds such as animal tracks, dens, or certain plants. Grandmother loved rocks and was always interested in the stones that the children carried back to show her. The holiday gatherings for my children have been smaller since we have lived farther away from family. However, we have carried on the tradition of walks in the woods or parks. We also try and include neighborhood children or friends when we make holiday decorations or cookies. For us, part of the season is simply taking the time to be with, and enjoy, each other."

"My Thanksgiving memories include being around family and eating lots of great food. My mom was a wonderful cook, and she would make at least a dozen pies on Thanksgiving to take to our family get-together, which included her sister, three of her brothers, and all of our cousins. My three sisters and I, as much as we try, cannot re-create the great pies that she made. For Christmas, I always remember getting to open one present on Christmas Eve, which would be a nice outfit from my grandparents in Arizona. My sisters and I would get to wear our outfits to Christmas Mass, which made the occasion more special. On Christmas morning, my dad would get up and fix breakfast, and then all six of us would get to open our presents. These are very special memories now that my mom is no longer with us."

"The day after Thanksgiving, mom-in-law takes all her daughters and daughters-in-law out for the lunch, and we all go Christmas shopping; while dad-in-law, sons, sons-in-law, and all the grandkids go to a movie. Everyone meets back at the grandparents' house for supper of Thanksgiving leftovers. While the big extended family can't be together on Thanksgiving Day, we're all together the day after, and the celebration lasts two days instead of one!"

However, there are times when those family celebrations don't work out exactly as planned. For instance:

"We have always been the ones who have had to travel to family gatherings because we have lived on a coast (both) and our families are in the Midwest. They have, without exception, been no fun or downright horrible for one reason or another. Perhaps I can pass along some tips for getting through the horribles.

- Prepare yourselves and the children: If Grandma smokes like a chimney, try to see that the children sleep away from her room. If you are expected to take part in activities, inquire about age-appropriate things for the kids, baby-sitting possibilities, necessary clothes.
- Incorporate some of your nuclear family's traditions into the larger group, e.g., cinnamon rolls for Christmas breakfast.
- Do fun things before and after the trip that are special for your nuclear family. You may also want to take time out for your own family during the trip, just to blow off steam if your relatives are driving you crazy.
- Invite a friend. People are sometimes inhibited from exhibiting their worst holiday grumpiness in the presence of a non-family member.
- Understand why people are behaving as they are.
- Use the opportunity to quiz family members about family history. This always produces fun conversation, and it is really good for the children to hear the stories.
- Have a couple of secret presents packed away, even for yourself.
- Don't overload your luggage with gifts, if you fly. They may get lost or be crushed or stolen. Ship ahead or buy them when you get there."

There may also be some tensions regarding child-rearing issues when families come together. Dr. Lilian

Katz (1983) in "Child-Rearing Disagreements" from our Parent Library has some suggestions:

- Exercise restraint so that most of the detailed argument can be played out away from the child.
- Develop a list of the issues that may spark disagreements and set aside time to discuss them.
- Remember, sensitive issues may be associated with painful memories of your childhood.
- Total agreement is not necessary; it is probably helpful for a child to observe how an adult accommodates differences.

In spite of the difficulties, when families or friends can't be together, they are frequently missed. From Canada, we hear: "We no longer live close enough to family to visit. However, my family had some traditions that I really enjoyed when I was a child. Every Christmas we would have our presents and our turkey dinner, then head over to my grandmother's. During the afternoon, all of her children and their families would come to visit. On New Year's Day, every year, we would all get together for a huge potluck and family "reunion" of sorts. It was really good. We would play games and get caught up on all of the family news. On Easter, we would go there too and have an Easter egg hunt. My aunt would hide eggs for each set of nieces and nephews as they arrived. It brings back many pleasant memories. I really REALLY wish I could spend Christmas with my family this year."

We also asked our PARENTING-L listserv to let us know about some family games that have become a tradition. Here are two:

"A game that my in-laws play during Christmas time is the dice game. Everybody brings approximately 5 wrapped gifts, most of which is silly stuff they have around the house and never use. All the gifts go in the center of the table, then we take turns rolling the dice. If you get a 7 or 11, you get to pick a gift. After all the gifts have been dispersed, the timer is set for 10 minutes and everybody rolls the dice quickly. If you get a 7 or 11, you are allowed to steal a gift from somebody else. Our family has grown quite a bit over the years, so now we divide the group into adults and children. Some of us will go to the Dollar Store and buy things for the kids and wrap those for the children's dice game. This is a fun game! One of the things that makes the game funny is when someone chooses a gift because of the way it is wrapped! One year my father-in-law "fought" for a gift—it turned out to be a breast-feeding book!"

"We play a game called "Sardines," a reverse hide-and-go-seek. One person hides while everyone else counts. The group then spreads out looking for the missing person. You may not turn on any lights that are not already on. We usually try to leave some lit areas for safety. When you find the person, you hide with them. The first person to find the missing family member hides next. It's quite a hoot when you have 20+ people playing. We have played it on a smaller scale in a house too."

Festivals, holidays, and celebrations with our family and friends are part of the valuable tapestry that weaves our traditions, culture, and community. One final memory for this year:

> "We have a traditional meal at a very formal holiday table; as a form of grace, we raise our glasses, and each of us in turn mentions something we are thankful for. Family, food, and friends are always mentioned early on, so the more people at the table, and depending on where one is seated, the more creative and introspective we have to be with our answers!"

From all the staff at ERIC/EECE and the National Parent Information Network, we raise our glasses to you and your family, wishing you the very best during this holiday time.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Anne S. Robertson

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Many thanks to our contributors:

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Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

"To Spank or Not to Spank": A Panel Discussion

The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) held its annual conference called "Fatherhood and Motherhood" on November 5-10, 1997, in Crystal City, Virginia. At this conference, I was invited to participate in a one-hour panel discussion sponsored by the Peace Focus Group. This group sponsors discussions on a topic relevant to the issue of peace, along with the theme of the biannual conference. This year's topic was "To Spank or Not to Spank."

The purpose of this article is to share some of the key threads that arose during this panel discussion in response to a series of questions. It is important to note that our panel was instructed to focus on the practical considerations of this issue, rather than exclusively on the research.

Panel Participants:

- Judith Myers-Walls, Associate Professor of Developmental Studies and Extension Specialist in Human Development at Purdue University
- Dawn Ramsburg, Doctoral Student in Human and Community Development and Research Assistant at the National Parent Information Network at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- David Pratto, Professor and Department Head of Sociology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro
- Thomas Chibucos, Professor and Department Chair of Family and Consumer Sciences at Bowling Green State University

Panel Moderator: Deborah Gentry, Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at Illinois State University

Key Questions for Panelists

What is discipline?

Discipline was defined by the panelists as "a domain (such as sociology or psychology), a habit of the mind, a part of the conscious attempt to socialize or shape behavior, a way of interacting with children, and a process of teaching children how to think and behave in certain ways, rather than an endpoint or consequence."

> "Physical punishment ('spanking') is one method of disciplining, but when people talk about needing to discipline their children, they almost always mean physical punishment."
>
> "People who discipline are always in positions of power, whether in the family or in institutions (teachers discipline; the legal system disciplines)."

When is spanking used?

Spanking is generally used in response to the following behaviors:

- Oppositional behaviors, such as talking back to parents or saying "No"
- Aggression, such as hitting, fighting, or biting
- Conflicts over chores, including not cleaning up room or refusing to do homework
- Following rules, such as bedtime or leaving a bike in the driveway
- Protecting the child in dangerous situations, such as when the child runs into the street

Panelists made the point that parents often report spanking when children engage in oppositional behaviors. Panelists suggested that parents feel frustration in such situations and a need to be doing something to control the child's behavior.

Parents seem to use spanking less in what they perceive as learning situations, such as when a child is learning (or having difficulty learning) how to tie his or her shoelaces. Yet some common situations when spanking is used may also be thought of as "learning situations." For example, not cleaning his or her room may happen because the child does not know how to clean the room. It's helpful if parents try to understand the causes of misbehavior.

For example, when parents ask themselves questions like "Why is my child resisting going to bed?" they are more likely to respond helpfully. Upon reflecting upon the child's motivations, parents may realize that the motivations for the "misbehavior" are appropriate. Motivations for resisting going to bed could be related to curiosity about what the adults are doing, fear of the dark, or simply not being tired. Depending on the child's motivation, parents might find different responses helpful, such as installing a night light or setting a later bedtime if the child is consistently not tired at bedtime.

Once parents begin thinking about the causes of a child's behavior, they can begin moving away from trying to control an immediate behavior to thinking about how to bring about the behaviors they want in the child in the long term. They begin to think about how their responses fit into the larger context of their parenting, including learning to connect parenting responses with overall family goals and values in life.

From a peace context, seeing the larger picture is especially important as parents reflect on how they want to teach their children about relationships between people.

Final Comments

"Spanking is a power-assertion approach which leaves parents responsible for managing children's behavior. But when parenting for peace and justice, both parents and children must become problem-solvers together." Judith Myers-Walls

"Parents may feel confused over their 'proper' parental authority. Yet even though they have an unequal relationship with their children, they can still be fair and just. Parents should ask themselves, 'Where must I assert my power, and when do I have an obligation to limit my power?'" Thomas Chibucos

"It is important for parents to understand their goals for their children. Once you figure out your goals, it becomes much clearer what you may need to do to help guide your children in achieving those goals. If control is a goal, parents must ask themselves 'What can I control?' By better understanding the growth and development of the child, this question can be answered more easily." Dawn Ramsburg

"Some ethnic groups have adaptive approaches to disciplining their children which are functional to achieving their goals. For example, to meet a goal of helping their child to survive, parents have to teach this child to listen to them. This may only be accomplished through physical punishment." Thomas Chibucos

"It is important to reflect on your values as a family and as a parent and decide whether you are willing to risk the damage to the relationship with your child and the modeling of violence by spanking." Judith Myers-Walls

". . . it may be necessary to decide how committed you are willing to be as a parent. Ask yourself if you would choose to physically punish a misbehavior or withdraw love as a punishment. From this perspective, you may think that physical punishment is not as harsh. But remember that it doesn't have to be an alternative." David Pratto

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

"Equity and Young Children as Learners" Highlights of Barbara Bowman's Speech at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference

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Last month at the Families, Technology, and Education Conference, Barbara Bowman, a noted authority in early childhood education and the president of the Erikson Institute in Chicago, spoke about issues of equity and computer use by young children. Bowman expressed delight that parents seem to recognize the importance of technology. Her remarks that have particular relevance to parents will be discussed in this article.

Citing a study that indicates that half of the nation's 17-year-olds are not adequately prepared for jobs that require technological skills, Bowman suggested that we are not currently teaching young children how to use technology creatively and competently. While we once thought that computers would interfere with the opportunities young children have to play with blocks or experiment with finger paint, we now recognize our responsibility to teach children to use technology so that they will be prepared to participate in the technological world of the 21st century.

Given the explosion in the number of software programs available today, Bowman sees them along a continuum from programs that are very open-ended and active, and require the child to direct the computer, to those that are very closed and passive and require the child to simply provide the correct answer to a question posed by the program.

Parents are most familiar with the closed-end programs that are essentially electronic worksheets designed for the drill and practice of basic reading and math skills. Two examples are the "Reader Rabbit" and "Math Rabbit" programs published by the Learning Company. These programs provide the child with a series of questions to be answered. While such programs add a measure of entertainment to drill and practice, they do not give the child an opportunity to use the computer as a tool to reflect his or her thinking.

Next on the continuum are the programs that offer a mixture of closed- and open-ended learning opportunities. Parents are also familiar with these programs. They take the form of storyboards, simulations, and games. Examples of this type are the programs published by Eduquest. In the underwater and rainforest programs, the child is actively involved in selecting pictures of plants, animals, and insects to use in the story he or she writes. The child has more control of what happens than he or she does in electronic worksheet programs, but the options from which the child may choose are predetermined by the person who wrote the program, and there are limits as to what the child may do with his or her choice.

The third area on the continuum is dominated by programs that provide information requested by the user. Examples of these programs are encyclopedias and dictionaries on CD-ROM and the Internet. The content is set by someone else, but the child interacts by locating the information he or she wants and using it as he or she wishes.

At the most open end of the continuum are programs that give the child control of the tool, telling the computer what to do to reflect the child's thinking. Examples of this sort of program are word processors, calculators, and graphics programs. To use these programs, the child must have a vision and use his or her knowledge about the program to reflect that vision.

While much software is valuable, Bowman suggests we need to shift to the open end of the continuum. We must help children actively use the computer as a tool to communicate their own thinking. In this way, the child is most cognitively active, and this active use is what is needed for 21st century.

Unfortunately, children from low-income and minority homes have less access to computers in their homes and schools than their middle- or upper-class peers who are part of the dominant society.

Bowman identified five recommendations that we must think about with respect to young children and technology:

1. People control technology. A child should learn that computers are controlled by a person, and that he or she could be that person. Children should begin to see themselves as individuals who control the technology.
2. Technology is not just computers; it takes many forms. Calculators, telephones, tape recorders—these are all technologies that perform specific tasks and operate in specific ways. Children can appreciate the differences in these forms.
3. Technology has rules that govern how it works. The various forms all have a power source. They all have a set of procedural instructions that tell us how to use them.
4. Technology has languages. While interacting with computers, children learn a specific vocabulary and way of speaking: "Load the disc" or "Turn on the modem." Children master this way of speaking quite easily.
5. Computer programs vary from the pre-programmed ones that require children to employ a narrow set of skills, to those that permit a more complex, broad range of possible outcomes.

In her closing comments, Bowman stressed the importance of providing all children with opportunities to use open-ended programs, and that our children must become individuals who are active users of technology (rather than reactors to it). Children must learn that technical skills are socially desirable and expected of all of us.

Barbara Bowman is one of three faculty members who founded the Erikson Institute in Chicago, Illinois, in 1966. She is an authority on early education and a nationally recognized advocate for improved and expanded training for practitioners who work with children and families.

Mrs. Bowman, a past president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) combines advocacy at the national level with a strong commitment to leadership and teaching. At Erikson she teaches courses in early education and administration. She has also taught at universities in China and Iran. In addition, she has directed training projects for Head Start teachers, caregivers of infants at risk for morbidity or mortality, and preschool primary teachers and administrators. Her research has most recently focused on the public schools, specifically to introduce developmentally appropriate *practices and authentic assessment in the early grades. She is a frequent consultant on parent support programs.*

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

CPSC Findings Differ from Greenpeace Report Findings on Lead in Children's Vinyl Products

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Greenpeace recently released the results of a study in which their researchers tested popular children's vinyl products for lead. Their study indicates that in 11 vinyl products tested, they found hazardous levels of lead. However, the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC's) tests of the same items found that 7 of the products had no or only trace levels of lead. Of the other 4, CPSC deemed 2 not hazardous because exposure to lead is unlikely (exposure occurs through ingestion or inhalation), and testing is not complete on the remaining 2 items.

The CPSC takes action to inform the public when hazards are present in consumer products. Recently, the CPSC warned the public about hazardous levels of lead in imported non-glossy vinyl miniblinds and playground equipment (with lead paint that has deteriorated and is now peeling).

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Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

Holiday Safety

Every year the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) provides information about safety hazards associated with toys and holiday decorating. The full text of both documents is available on the CPSC Web sites. Both articles provide valuable information of interest to parents.

CPSC Releases Safety Tips for the Holiday Season
http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml98/98030.html

CPSC Releases Toy Safety Tips for the Holiday Season
http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml98/98031.html

Prepared for *Parent News* by Debbie Reese.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

Schools and Communities: Looking beyond the Classroom

We commonly hear about how important it is for parents to be involved with their child and school. Yet both teachers and parents often feel frustrated over what is expected in terms of parent involvement. One way to reduce teachers' frustration over perceived lack of parental involvement as well as reduce parents' feelings of inadequacy is to increase the amount of communication between parents and teachers. One method for increasing communication is through home visits. A recent article in *Education Week* (1997, September 3) reminds us that outreach efforts between home and school need to go both ways. This article describes the efforts of teachers and principals across the country who are learning that in order to get to know students and their families it helps to knock on some doors.

What Have They Learned?

Many schools have learned that home visits can be useful. Home visits are a way to build relationships between home and school as they open up the lines of communication with parents as well as provide teachers and administrators with valuable information about their students.

Carole Kennedy, principal of Lange Middle School in Columbia, Missouri, has found that many of the elements of her home visits are the same: friendly greetings, "props" from school (floor plan, school supply list, newsletter, and an invitation to the school Open House), and reassurance for the student and family. To Carole, home visits are simply part of her job as an educator. Many educators are coming to believe that home visits are one of the best ways to foster parents' support of children's learning, which researchers have continuously pointed out as one key to student achievement.

Tim Messenger, a third-year teacher in Flint, Michigan, has found home visits to have a positive impact on parent participation. For example, after visiting all 19 of his first-graders' homes during the first few weeks of school last year, he reports that every child in his classroom had a parent or guardian show up at the school Open House. In addition, his class won four top prizes for parent participation at the school last year.

While these two educators believe in the benefits of home visiting, the article notes that many schools have people specifically hired to make contact with families (such as social workers). It is noted, however, that visits from family liaisons do not replace those from principals and teachers. Instead, the schools that are most likely to benefit from such workers are also the schools that would most likely benefit from the extra outreach of faculty. While teachers and principals may not always be the best qualified to evaluate family needs, they can uniquely define the work of the school.

Barriers to Implementing Home Visits

Despite demonstrated successes with home visiting, the article provides the following reasons for the lack of home visits in many schools:

1. Many teachers do not see home visits as part of their job. Some teachers already spend numerous hours outside of the classroom on their work and may believe they do not have time to conduct home visits. In addition, some teacher contracts may prohibit administrators from requiring teachers to perform home visits.
2. Some teachers are afraid of parents. Some teachers may have concerns over their physical safety, but more are worried that they would not be welcome in the home. Yet as Pat Dingsdale, the chair of the National PTA's Education Commission, points out, "Most parents would welcome a home visit."

To overcome such barriers, the following guidelines are offered.

Do's and Don'ts for Home Visits

- Define a goal for your visit. Examples: Say hello, get acquainted, leave information, discuss a problem, or any combination of these.
- Listen carefully and ask whether there are any questions.
- Try to bring a translator if necessary, but don't abandon the idea of a visit if none is available.
- Consider alerting the family to your visit (telephone, note home, or postcard).
- Bring a token of the school or a talking point (a book to share, information about the school, a picture of your own family).
- Set a reasonable length of time for visits (20 minutes up to 1 hour).
- Plan for at least some late afternoon or evening visits.
- Don't require parents or guardians to read or fill out anything in your presence (they may not have good literacy skills).
- Don't go alone if you are hesitant about your safety or ability to overcome cultural barriers.

Source

House Calls. (1997, September 3). *APA Monitor*, pp. 37-40.

Prepared for *Parent News* by Dawn Ramsburg.

Also see "Homevisiting: Bridging the Gap between a Family and the Community", Parent News for July 1997.

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Of Interest

Children's Books

The ERIC system offers documents called "Information Guides" on a broad range of topics related to education. Of relevance to children's literature is an ERIC Info Guide called "Children's Literature" written by Sue A. Clary in 1994 (updated on November 15, 1995, by Twana Weiler). This online info guide contains links to many Web sites about children's literature. It is available online at:

http://ericir.syr.edu/cgi-bin/markup_infoguides/Alphabetical_List_of_InfoGuides/Children's_Lit-11.95

Below is a list of children's books related to the following topics: child care and cultural diversity.

Child Care

Busy at Day Care Head to Toe by Patricia Brennan Demuth, illustrated by Jack Demuth (Published in 1996 by Dutton Children's Books).

Carl Goes to Daycare by Alexandra Day (Published in 1993 by Farrar Straus & Giroux).

Edward Unready for School (Edward-the-Unready) by Rosemary Wells (Published in 1995 by Dial Books for Young Readers).

First Day at Day Care (Allegra's Window Series) by Ellen Weiss, illustrated by Nate Evans (Published in 1996 by Little Simon).

Going to My Nursery School by Susan Kuklin (Published in 1990 by Simon & Schuster).

I Can Go to Preschool (Muppet Babies Big Steps Book) by Bonnie Worth, illustrated by David Prebenna (Published in 1997 by Golden Books).

Cultural Diversity

All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka (Published in 1994 by William Morrow & Company).

All in a Day by Mitsumasa Anno, Raymond Briggs, et al. (Published in 1990 by Philomel).

Baseball Saved Us by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee (Published in 1995 by Lee and Low).

Bird Talk by Lenore Keeshig-Tobias (Published in 1992 by Peguis Publications).

Black Like Kyra, White Like Me by Judith Vigna (Published in 1992 by Concept Books).

Everybody Bakes Bread by Norah Dooley, illustrated by Peter J. Thornton (Published in 1996 by Carolrhoda Books).

Everybody Cooks Rice by Norah Dooley (Published in 1992 by First Avenue).

Nappy Hair by Carolivia Herron (Published in 1997 by Knopf).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

Guides, Brochures, and Fact Sheets

DiGangi, Joseph. (1997). ***Toxic Toy Story: Lead and Cadmium in Vinyl Children's Products.***

Polyvinyl chloride (vinyl or PVC) is a substance widely used in children's products. Because children in contact with these products may ingest substantial quantities of potentially harmful chemicals during normal play, especially when they chew on the product, this Greenpeace study examined the levels of lead and cadmium in a variety of consumer products. A collection of 131 PVC products, including clothing, backpacks, toys, and household items, were purchased at national chain stores such as K-Mart, Walmart, Target, and Toys R Us. Findings indicated that about 20% of the products contained from 100 to over 22,000 parts-per-million lead, with 18% of the products exceeding the maximum lead limit recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All the lead-containing products contained varying levels of cadmium, a known carcinogen. The study was replicated with the same results with products purchased in California, 10 major U.S. cities, and Montreal, Canada. Several products released lead- or cadmium-contaminated dust over a 4-week period. Additional materials appended to this report include a consumer bulletin, the summary of an additional study on the level of phthalates in PVC products, a scientific contact list, and background information on soft PVC toys. Five appendices discuss lead and cadmium toxicity, exposure, and regulation; the reason for the Greenpeace investigation; regulation of lead in vinyl products; stabilizers in PVC; and the materials and methods used in the study. Contains about 35 references. PS026006

Also see related *Parent News* articles "A New Alert on Lead in Vinyl Miniblinds" and "CPSC Findings Differ from Greenpeace Report Findings on Lead in Children's Vinyl Products".

Joe DiGangi
Greenpeace
847 W. Jackson
Chicago, IL 60607
Telephone: 312-563-6065

Stanton, Danielle. (1997). ***The Art of Living Better in a Recombined Family = L'art de mieux vivre une recomposition familiale.***

Recombined families are faced with the same challenges as "ordinary" families. However, the relationships that unite the members of the recombined family are more complex, which causes a potentially higher number of difficulties than in other families. This brochure, in French- and English-language versions, was designed to address these special situations. Rather than attempting to answer all questions or provide models, the brochure is intended to provide people with ideas, suggestions, and information they need to begin and get through the recombining process successfully, with particular regard to children's happiness.

The brochure addresses such issues as the tension between simply forming a new couple through marriage or forming a new family; the need for patience and openness throughout the process; children's need for input, stability, and reassurance; the role of the biological parents as partners with regard to the children; and obtaining family support services. PS025960

Counseil de la famille
875, Grande Allee Est
Edifice H, 3e etage
Quebec, Quebec, G1R 5W5, Canada

Decoste, Ginette. (1997). ***Recognizing Family Dynamics: Community and Professional Actions Inspired by the Think and Act Family Guide = Reconnaitre la dynamique familiale: des actions communautaires et professionneles inspirees par le guide.***

This report, in French- and English-language versions, synthesizes the policy laid down in the "Think and Act Family" guide, which Quebec's Counseil de la Famille made public in 1989. The report is intended for those who work with families in any function, such as a volunteer, a professional, or an administrator; it emphasizes that a family approach is appropriate for the vast majority of cases dealing with prevention, training, increased awareness, and situations of conflict. The report is intended as an inspiration and resource to encourage the integration of the family approach into all facets of human services. Chapters are: (1) "Think and Act Family" Applied to Policies and Programs—A Reminder from the 1989 Guide; (2) Community and Professional Actions Inspired by Family Criteria; (3) The Necessary Conditions for Practicing the Family Approach; (4) The Steps Involved in the Family Approach; and (5) Making the Family Approach Effective. Appendices present the family criteria from the "Think and Act Family" guide, and "Focus on the Family in Treatment and Services." PS025957

Counseil de la famille
875, Grande Allee Est
Edifice H, 3e etage
Quebec, Quebec, G1R 5W5, Canada

Renwick, Margery. (1997). ***Starting School: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers.*** **($14.85, New Zealand dollars).**

Starting school is a milestone in a child's life. This booklet for New Zealand parents and caregivers offers guidelines for making the transition to school a positive experience. The topics discussed include: (1) selecting a school; (2) visiting the school; (3) enrolling children in school; (4) the initial adjustment; (5) clothes and schoolbags; (6) bilingual and immersion classes; (7) the curriculum; (8) classroom organization; (9) homework; (10) computers; and (11) food at school. Parents' viewpoints are shared through diary entries throughout the booklet that record their children's experiences with starting school. (Contains 12 references.) PS025936

New Zealand Council for Educational Research Distribution Services
P.O. Box 3237
Wellington, New Zealand
Fax: 04-384-7933

Copple, Carol (Ed.). (1997). ***Getting a Good Start in School.***

In 1990, the National Education Goals were established by the President and the 50 state governors. Goal 1 stated that by the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn. This booklet is a condensed version of an earlier document intended to further amplify the dimensions of early learning and development used by the National Educational Goals Panel to measure progress toward Goal 1. Following a list of objectives of Goal 1 and a look at the subjective nature of assessing learning readiness, the booklet briefly discusses the following five dimensions that contribute to school preparedness: (1) health and physical development; (2) emotional well-being and social competence, serving as the foundation for relationships that give meaning to the school experience; (3) approaches to learning, referring to the inclinations, dispositions, or styles by which children acquire knowledge; (4) communicative skills, including language and reading and writing processes; and (5) cognition and general knowledge, the sum of children's early experiences and how they record those experiences. Characteristics of five children considered ready to learn are noted, highlighting the different combination of strengths and weaknesses along the five dimensions. The booklet concludes with a list of publications about or related to readiness for parents, educators, and policymakers. PS025903

National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd St., NW, Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037
Telephone: 202-724-0015
Fax: 202-632-0957
Email: NEGP@goalline.org
Internet: http://www.negp.gov/

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

Book Summaries and Reviews

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1. Lindsay, Jeanne Warren; McCullough, Sally. (1991). ***Discipline from Birth to Three: How to Prevent and Deal with Discipline Problems with Babies and Toddlers.*** **Morning Glory Press, Inc., 6595 San Haroldo Way, Buena Park, CA 90620-3748; telephone: 714-828-1998; fax: 714-828-2049 (Paperback, $9.95, plus $3 shipping. California residents add 7.75% sales tax).**

Written for teenage parents, this book is designed to help them use appropriate methods of discipline for their infants and toddlers. Chapter 1, "Discipline Is Important!" defines discipline and discusses the importance of setting limits. Chapter 2, "Infants and Discipline," concerns the importance of parents disciplining themselves to meet infants' needs during the first 6 months. Chapter 3, "He's Crawling—Help!" focuses on discipline during the second half of baby's first year, including feeding and bedtime concerns. Chapter 4, "Child-Proofing as Discipline," discusses preparing the environment to safely nurture infant curiosity. Chapter 5, "One to Two Years—Into Everything," addresses toddlers' growth of independence, scribbling and painting, problems with biting, and the importance of imitation. Chapter 6, "Yelling, Spanking Don't Help," deals with problems posed by and alternatives to corporal punishment. Chapter 7, "Two to Three Years—Your Busy Runabout," discusses the toddlers' skills, their desire to imitate and be in control, and temper tantrums. Chapter 8, "Don't Rush Toilet Training," provides guidelines for respecting children's feelings while toilet training, toileting readiness, and tips for success. Chapter 9, "Focus on Mom and Dad," addresses challenges to teenage parents, stresses of parenting, self-confidence, and fathers' role. Chapter 10, "When Too Much Goes Wrong," identifies stresses of teenage parenting, defines child abuse, and suggests sources of support. Chapter 11, "When Grandparents Help Discipline," concerns the importance of consistency in discipline when there is more than one caregiver. Chapter 12, "Ten Strategies that Work," summarizes effective discipline strategies for infants and toddlers. Contains 17 references. PS025834

2.Yeager, Mark. (1997). ***Breakfast Is Only the Beginning: A Fun-Filled, Practical Guide to Keeping Up with Your Preschooler.*** **Fairview Press, 2450 Riverside Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55454; telephone: 800-544-8207; fax: 612-672-4980 (U.S., $13.95; Canada, $17.95, plus shipping).**

Preschool parents have no time for trial and error; they are too busy with day-to-day survival. Practical survival tips for parents of preschoolers are interspersed with humorous anecdotes in this book, organized according to a typical day in the lives of preschool children. Tips are organized according to three interaction levels: (1) "parents initiate goal-directed activities, and children agree to participate"; (2) "parents behaving like grown-ups and kids behaving like children"; and (3) "anything that makes a parent feel guilty." Chapter 1, "Morning Anyone?" defines interaction levels and makes suggestions for dealing with preschoolers' early rising. Chapter 2, "Breakfast Is Only the Beginning," deals with preparing and cleaning up breakfast. Chapter 3, "Dressed Out," focuses on persuading children to get dressed. Chapter 4, "Bathroom Adventures," addresses basic toileting skills. Chapter 5, "Now What?" suggests play activities for each room in the house. Chapter 6, "Lunchstop," makes suggestions for the elemental, mobile, and fast-food lunch. Chapter 7, "Nap Action," includes persuading preschoolers to take a nap. Chapter 8, "Life on the Outside," suggests activities for summer and winter fun. Chapter 9, "Mobile Homes," deals with tips for surviving car travel, including car seats and long trips. Chapter 10, "Dinner Break," includes suggestions for encouraging picky eaters. Chapter 11, "Bath Play," concerns persuading preschoolers to bathe, bath time rules, and teethbrushing. Chapter 12, "Bedtime Business," includes preparing children for going to sleep and dealing with monsters. Chapter 13, "Wellness Misadventures," concerns dealing with children's colds, minor illnesses, and injuries. Chapter 14, "Surviving," concerns changes in parents' personal lifestyle and relationship with their partner brought about by parenting a preschooler. PS025812

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3. Murray, Lynne (Ed.); Cooper, Peter J. (Ed.). (1997). *Postpartum Depression and Child Development*. Guilford Publications, Inc., 72 Spring St., New York, NY 10012; telephone: 800-365-7006, 212-431-9800; fax: 212-966-6708; email: info@guilford.com (U.S., $35; Canada, $37).

Only recently has the research on postpartum depression dealt with the disorder's effects on child development. This book explores the impact of postpartum depression on mother-infant interaction and child development, its treatment, and postpartum psychosis. The chapters are: (1) "The Nature of Postpartum Depressive Disorders" (Michael O'Hara); (2) "Fragile Aspects of Early Social Integration" (Hanus Papousek and Mechthild Papousek); (3) "Depressed Mothers and Infants: Failure to Form Dyadic States of Consciousness" (E. Tronick and M. Katherine Weinberg); (4) "Postpartum Depression and Cognitive Development" (Dale Hay); (5) "The Role of Infant and Maternal Factors in Postpartum Depression, Mother-Infant Interactions, and Infant Outcomes" (Lynne Murray and Peter Cooper); (6) "Maternal Cognitions as Mediators of Child Outcomes in the Context of Postpartum Depression" (Douglas Teti and Donna Gelfand); (7) "The Timing and Chronicity of Postpartum Depression: Implications for Infant Development" (Susan Campbell and Jeffrey Cohn); (8) "The Impact of Psychological Treatments of Postpartum Depression on Maternal Mood and Infant Development" (Peter Cooper and Lynne Murray); (9) "The Treatment of Depressed Mothers and Their Infants" (Tiffany Field); (10) "Psychodynamic Perspectives on the Treatment of Postpartum Depression" (Bertrand Cramer); (11) "The Impact of Postpartum Affective Psychosis on the Child" (Alison Hipwell and Channi Kumar); and (12) "Afterword. Maternal Depression and Infant Development: Cause and Consequence; Sensitivity and Specificity" (Michael Rutter). Each chapter contains references. PS025829

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4. Bigelow, Brian J.; Tesson, Geoffrey; Lewko, John H. (1996). *Learning the Rules: The Anatomy of Children's Relationships*. Guilford Publications, Inc., 72 Spring St., New York, NY 10012; telephone: 800-365-7006; 212-431-9800; fax: 212-966-6708; email: info@guilford.com (Hardcover, U.S., $35; Canada, $38.50).

This book explores the process and characteristics of children's personal and social relationships. To determine what relationships mean to children and how children manage those relationships, a recursive interviewing technique was used with nearly a thousand children to detail children's social rules. Those rules cover a range of social issues, from compliance and autonomy, to self-assertiveness and conflict management, to mutual activities and the governance of obligation, intimacy, and trust. In interpreting children's verbalized social rules with parents, siblings, peers, and teachers, this book provides a contextually informed framework from which to explore such issues as the impact of parental authority on child compliance, sibling rivalry, and close friendships. The chapters of the book are: (1) "Social Competency and Friendships in Middle Childhood: 'Lord of the Flies' Revisited"; (2) "Social Rules and the Implicate Order: Toward a Sociology of Childhood"; (3) "Phenomenology and Relationships: The Birth of Social Rules"; (4) "The Rules and with Whom They Are Used: Compliance and Autonomy"; (5) "The

Rules and with Whom They Are Used: Self-Control and Conflict Management"; (6) "The Rules and with Whom They Are Used: Mutual Activities and Obligation"; (7) "Social Competency and the Sorcerer's Apprentice: The Importance of Parents"; (8) "Siblings: The Relationship You Don't Have to Earn to Keep"; (9) "Social Rule Rationales: The Child as a Relationship Philosopher"; and (10) "Concluding Remarks." Appendices describe: (1) extracting social rules from interviewing"; (2) the recursive interview protocol; and (3) data analyses. Contains 342 references. PS025828

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5. Levine, James A.; Pittinsky, Todd L. (1997). *Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family.* Addison-Wesley, Inc., One Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867-3999; telephone: 800-552-2259 (U.S., $30; Canada, $31.50).

With the steady rise in the number of women joining the workforce, fathers are taking on more responsibility for the nurturing of their children, partly by necessity but often by choice, while still retaining their "breadwinner" pressures. This book is intended to help men reconcile the demands of work and family. It is based on a decade of research on men's changing dynamics around work and family, conducted by the Fatherhood Project at the Families and Work Institute (FWI). Data include company case studies and reports from focus groups, interviews with over 200 working fathers in diverse occupations across industries, and an analysis of FWI's National Study of the Changing Workforce, a nationally representative survey of over 3,000 members of the U.S. labor force. Chapters are: (1) "Daddy Stress: The Invisible Dilemma"; (2) "Daddy Success: The Payoff for Fathers, Mothers, Companies, and Kids"; (3) "Creating the Father-Friendly Workplace"; (4) "Breaking the [Corporate] Culture Collusion"; (5) "Managing Paternity Leave: A Smart Investment"; (6) "Connecting with Your Family"; (7) "Staying Connected when You're Traveling"; (8) "Connecting through School, Day Care, and Other 'Significant Others'"; and (9) "Working Fathers: Balancing the New Work-Family Equation." PS025947

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6. Koetzsch, Ronald E. (1997). *The Parents' Guide to Alternatives in Education: The First In-Depth Guide to the Full Range of Choices in Alternative Schooling, with All the Information You Need to Decide What Kind of Education Is Right for Your Child.* Shambhala Publications, Inc., Horticultural Hall, 300 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115; Internet: http://www.shambhala.com (U.S., $17; Canada, $23.50).

Recognizing that parents have a great range of options in choosing and creating an education for their child, this book is designed to help parents make an informed, conscious choice about their child's schooling. Chapters in the first part of the guide provide an overview of American education, the mainstream public sector, and alternative education movements. Chapter 1 looks at the origin and early development of the American public school system. Chapter 2 treats the humanistic-progressive movement, while chapter 3 describes the religious-traditionalist movement. Chapter 4 discusses the range of education alternatives available in the current system. Chapters in the second section deal with six important movements in present-day education: (1) whole language; (2) cooperative learning; (3) the social curriculum; (4) multicultural education; (5) developmental education; and (6) education for character. The third part of the guide looks at 22 types of programs and schools that provide viable alternatives to mainstream public education: Carden Schools, Christian Schools, Comer Schools, Core Knowledge Schools, Essential Schools, Foxfire, Free Schools, Friends Schools, Holistic Schools, International Baccalaureate, Islamic Schools, Jewish Day Schools, Mennonite and Amish Schools, Montessori Schools, Multiple Intelligences, Protestant Schools, Reggio Emilia Approach, Catholic Schools, Waldorf Education, and Teenage Liberation. Each chapter presents the approach's history, philosophy, and principles; describes practical strategies of the educational approach; describes one or two actual schools using that particular approach; and lists resources and a bibliography. The guide's final section offers practical advice in choosing a school and on creating a school of one's own. Contains 41 references. PS025846

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7. Hopkins-Best, Mary. (1997). ***Toddler Adoption: The Weaver's Craft.*** **Perspectives Press, P.O. Box 90318, Indianapolis, IN 46290-02318; telephone: 317-872-3055; email: ppress@iquest.net; Internet: www.perspectivespress.com ($23.95, plus $4.92 shipping and handling; Indiana residents must add 5% sales tax).**

Based on concern about the lack of information on adopting toddlers, this book examines the special needs of adopted toddlers and their adoptive parents. Chapter 1, "Why Write a Book on Toddler Adoption?" details the lack of information on the difficulties of adopted toddlers in forming attachments and parents' child-rearing difficulties. Chapter 2, "Is Toddler Adoption for You?" includes discussion of the availability of toddlers for adoption, developing an adoption plan, and rewards and challenges of toddler adoption. Chapter 3, "Getting Started on Adoption," describes the homestudy process, activities contributing to a sense of entitlement, and preparing friends and family for the adoption. Chapter 4, "The Adoption Transition," deals with pre-placement preparation, placement practices, post-placement practices, and factors affecting the ease of the transition. Chapter 5, "Understanding Your Toddler's Development," provides information on physical, cognitive, and social/emotional developmental tasks during the toddler period and how to deal with developmental delays and foster healthy development. Chapter 6, "Parenting the Grieving Toddler," includes indicators of grief and how to support the grieving process and provide structure and predictability. Chapter 7, "Becoming Attached," discusses characteristics of attachment problems, parental strategies that foster attachment, and professional intervention. Chapter 8, "Behavior Management," deals with management style and the use of positive parenting. Chapter 9, "Parents Have Needs, Too," examines post-adoption parental stress, loneliness, and the importance of networking. An appendix provides demographic information on adoptive parents of 26 toddlers, based on a questionnaire about the adoption experience. Contains 62 references. PS025748

Publications cited with a PS number are cited in the ERIC database. Most documents are available in ERIC microfiche collections at more than 900 locations worldwide and can be ordered through EDRS: 800-443-ERIC. Journal articles are available from the original journal, interlibrary loan services, or article reproduction clearinghouses such as UnCover (800-787-7070), UMI (800-732-0616), or ISI (800-523-1850).

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

Organizations

Consumer Product Safety Commission

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent Federal regulatory agency that helps keep American families safe by reducing the risk of injury or death from consumer products. An important part of this mission is to inform the public about hazards associated with consumer products such as toys and household goods. CPSC provides information through several avenues: local and national media coverage, publication of numerous booklets and product alerts, a Web site, a telephone hotline, a fax-on-demand service, the National Injury Information Clearinghouse, and CPSC's Public Information Center.

Contact

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, DC 20207
Telephone: 800-638-2772
Telephone for hearing and speech impaired: 800-638-8270
Email: info@cpsc.gov
Internet: http://www.cpsc.gov

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

Newsletters

Transition Magazine (Special Issue) Families: It's About Time! = Les familles ont besoin de temps!

This special issue of *Transition* magazine, in French- and English-language versions, presents a broad view of the Great Canadian Family—all of Canada's families, large and small, "traditional" and otherwise. The issue also examines the challenges of family life at the end of the 20th century in two major articles. The first article, "Of Wings and Roots" (Alan Mirabelli and Robert Glossop), presents an overview of the facts on families today and suggests how society can create a more hospitable climate for family life. This article argues that society needs to reaffirm traditions, find time to meet the needs for extended family to spend time together, and reinforce family with a community that shares the responsibility of endowing the next generation with strong roots. The second article, "Life in the Time Machine: Families Keeping Pace in a Hurried Culture" (Kerry Daly), discusses the issue of time management as it affects families. This article traces the history of attitudes about time, questions modern assumptions about the value of speed and efficiency, and advocates re-evaluating how people spend their time. The issue concludes with information on new publications and a list of Canadian organizations with an interest in families. Cost: Individual member, $30; Organizational member, $65; Associate member, $20; or free to those who find the fee a financial burden. For more information:

Vanier Institute of the Family
94 Centrepointe Dr.
Nepean, Ontario K2G 6B1, Canada
Telephone: 613-228-8500
Fax: 613-228-8007
Email: vig@compuserve.com

Healthy Child Care America

This newsletter is offered by the American Academy of Pediatrics to health care professionals, child care providers, and families interested in working together to promote health and safety in child care. A recent issue discusses ways that nurses can be health consultants in a child care setting and playground safety, including a safety checklist. For more information:

Laura Butil Aird, MS
American Academy of Pediatrics
P.O. Box 927
Elk Grove village, IL 600009-0928
Telephone: 800-433-9016, ext. 7132
Email: childcare@aaap.org

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

NETWorking: Other Gopher and WWW Sites to Visit

Name: Child Care Aware

Sponsor: Dayton Hudson Corporation

Description: Child Care Aware is a national initiative designed to improve the quality of child care and increase the availability of high-quality child care in local communities. The mission of Child Care Aware is to ensure that every parent has access to good information about finding high-quality child care and resources in their community through national consumer marketing and by raising visibility for local child care resource and referral agencies. Child Care Aware: (1) operates a toll-free hotline for parents seeking child care information and assistance (800-424-2246), (2) provides a link to child care resource and referral agencies nationwide, and (3) offers free information to parents including brochures and tip sheets on choosing high-quality child care.

Address: http://www.targetadv.com/TargetWWW/html/child01.htm

Name: The Soho Center

Sponsor: The National Center for Nonprofit Resources

Description: The Soho Center is a nonprofit national resource for family child care. It is involved in planning and implementing innovative child-care-related programs. More recently, the Soho Center has focused on the development of innovative strategies that find and affect family child care providers.

Address: http://www.child2000.org

Name: Canada's SchoolNet

Description: Canada's SchoolNet is an educational initiative supported by a variety of organizations across Canada. SchoolNet helps facilitate excellence in learning through electronic networking across Canada. Some of the services include: (1) Community Access Project, which is designed to help rural communities access the Internet; (2) Computers for Schools program; (3) Features of the Week; and (4) the Special Needs Education Network.

Address: http://www.schoolnet.ca

Name: The Ohio State University Human Development & Family Life Education Resource Center

Description: The Human Development and Family Life Education Resource Center provides information and resources related to issues and concerns of children, youth, and families. This site is intended to provide support and resources for Family Life Educators and others who conduct education and prevention programs for children, youth, and families. In addition, opportunities for professional development, program resources, scholarly publications, and links to other resources are provided.

Address: http://www.hec.ohio-state.edu/famlife/

Continue to the next article.
Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.

Parent News for December 1997

Resources for Parents

The Parenting Calendar

Conference: National Prevention through Recreation Services School

Sponsor: National Recreation and Park Association; Fort Worth Park and Community Services Department; Texas A & M University

Date: January 29-31, 1998

Place: Fort Worth, Texas

Description: The National Prevention through Recreation Services School builds on the successful National Recreation for At-Risk Youth Colloquium held in Fort Worth in 1995 and the resulting 10 colloquia that were held across the United States and Canada in 1996. The purpose of the school is to provide a forum for advancing knowledge about the contribution of recreation programs and services to meeting the needs of children and youth in our communities. While the specific focus of the school will be on children who are living in high-risk environments, many of the issues relate to planning prevention-oriented programs for all children and youth in the community.

Contact:

National Recreation and Park Association Western Service Center
619 Prospect Lake Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80910
Telephone: 719-632-7031
Fax: 719-632-0709
Internet: http://wwwrpts.tamu.edu/conference/at-risk1.htm

Conference: Parents Anonymous National Leadership Conference

Date: February 18-21, 1998

Place: Claremont, California

Description: This conference is sponsored by the Parents Anonymous National Organization.

Contact:

Parents Anonymous National Organization
Telephone: 909-621-6184
Fax: 909-625-6304
Email: parentsanon@msn.com
Internet: http://www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

Conference: Connecticut C.A.R.E.S. 10th Annual Conference

Date: February 27-28, 1998

Place: Hastings Hotel and Conference Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Description: This conference acts as a medium for local, state, and national exchanges of information about child care. It is an opportunity for all family child care and center providers to gain personal and professional growth in their roles as caregivers and teachers.

Contact:

Brenda LaRose
Telephone: 860-974-1497

Conference: Fifteenth Biennial Conference on Human Development

Sponsor: Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, and College of Education at the University of South Alabama

Date: March 5-7, 1998

Place: Mobile, Alabama

Description: Papers, posters, and symposia on developmental issues will be presented. Invited speakers include: Elizabeth Bates from the University of California-San Diego; John Bransford from Vanderbilt University; Robert Siegler from Carnegie-Mellon University; and Deborah Lowe Vandell from the University of Wisconsin.

Contact:

Lisa Turner, Ph.D.
Chair, Conference on Human Development
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Internet: http://www.coe.usouthal.edu/cohd/cohd98.htm

Conference: 1998 Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Conference

Sponsor: Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR)

Date: March 16-18, 1998

Place: DoubleTree Hotel, Tuscon, Arizona

Description: The CYFAR Conference provides an exciting opportunity for extension staff, collaborators, and volunteers working toward the CYFAR mission to work collectively to sustain effective community-based programs and share resources with others across the nation. The CYFAR Conference brings together the resources of the National Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk Initiative that support program development, evaluation, training, technology, and technical assistance with the community and state extension faculty who build and sustain effective programs for at-risk children and their families. Conference sessions will provide information on curricula, needs assessment, coalition building, administration of programs, resource development, diversity, Internet access, marketing impact, and evaluation. A major focus of CYFAR 98 will be sustainability of community-based programs and of organizational changes that have been developed in their support.

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Internet: http://www.reeusda.gov/new/4h/cyfar/cyfar_98.htm

Conference: Celebrating 25 Years of Standing for America's Children

Sponsor: Children's Defense Fund

Date: March 25-28, 1998

Place: Los Angeles, California

Description: At the Children's Defense Fund 18th Annual National Conference, participants will be provided with workable strategies, concrete skills, and inspiration that will enable them to build bridges and forge new partnerships for children.

Contact:

Leslie Warrick or Dana Weaver
Children's Defense Fund
25 E St. NW
Washington, DC 20001
Telephone: 202-662-3967
Fax: 202-662-3540

Conference: Pioneering Partnerships: The Courage to Explore

Sponsor: National School-Age Care Alliance

Date: April 30-May 2, 1998

Place: Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seattle, Washington

Description: This conference is designed for professionals who provide high-quality enrichment programs for children and youth, ages 5-14, when they are not in school. The conference will feature over 120 workshops, tours to out-of-school programs, keynote speakers, exhibitors, fun events, and networking opportunities with others.

Contact:

Janet Frieling
Conference Coordinator
School's Out Consortium
Washington's School-Age Care Alliance
1118 Fifth Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101
Telephone: 206-461-3602
Fax: 206-461-4860

Return to the Parent News for December 1997 contents page.
Return to the NPIN home page.